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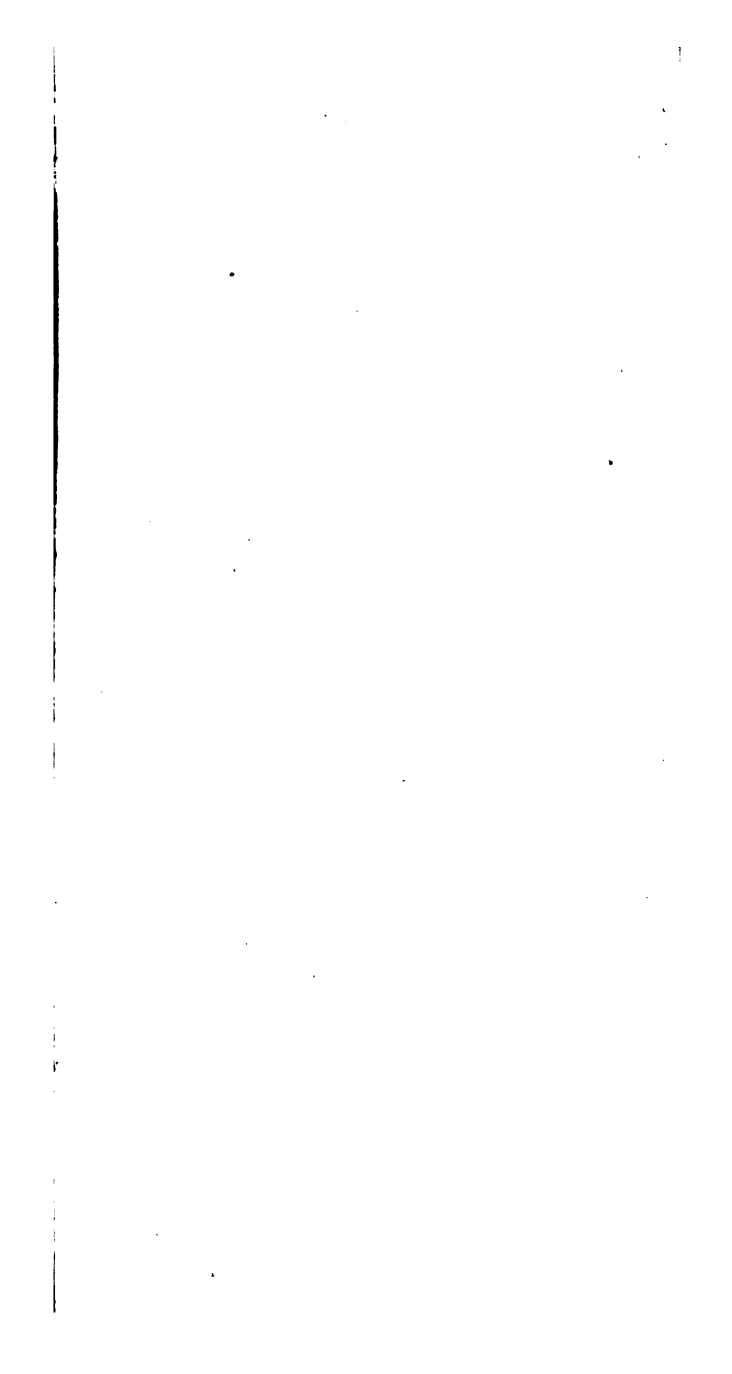
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HELEN BRENT, M. D.

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*H. J. Lincomb -
from
M. E. Allen.*

HELEN BRENT, M. D.

A SOCIAL STUDY

by Mrs. C. M. F. Allen

NEW YORK
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HELEN BRENT, M. D.

I.

NE bright, warm spring afternoon, there was a large and enthusiastic crowd assembled in West—th Street. The occasion was the laying of the corner stone of the Root Memorial Hospital and College for Women. The crowd was enormous. All the seats were filled, many people were standing far out into the roadway, and at all the available windows were eager faces; even upon some of the neighbor-

ing roofs there were spectators looking down upon the sight. It was a fashionable crowd, for the Root Memorial had been the topic of the town for the past two years. This is its peculiar history :

For some time it had been rumored about that the wealthy Mrs. Root had determined to give a large sum to some worthy object in memory of her greatly lamented spouse, Phineas Root. Poor Mrs. Root (and I say that advisedly, although her personal fortune was estimated at something between twenty-five and thirty millions) had no sooner allowed this whisper to get abroad than she was subjected to the most fearful martyrdom. There was not a college professor throughout the country that did not see himself the honored head of a department that "never before had been able to offer such unique opportunities for research—through the munificent gift of

Mrs. Root;" there was not a babies' hospital, not a society for the distribution of tracts among the heathen, not an association for the suppression of vice, not a sewing circle that did not bring forward its just and peculiar claims in the most eloquent terms. The world soon found out which church could boast the honor of being guardian to the soul and thirty millions of the renowned Mrs. Root, and there was not a church of that denomination (I am not going to commit myself) from Texas to Maine that did not assume the right to "Propagate the divine gospel as it never could have been done before," "To sweep sin from the face of the earth," and all by means of Mrs. Root's millions.

A sharp struggle waged at home between the minister and the physician, that together bore the responsibility of caring for Mrs. Root's physical and spiritual welfare. The Reverend Dr. Hark-

less argued that nothing would assure the everlasting peace of the late lamented so completely as the erection of a magnificent church with expressly imported bronze doors, stained glass windows, organ, carved pews, etc., and last, but not least, a snugly fitted-up parsonage. But the wily Dr. Snowborough, on the other hand, insisted that nothing would comfort the dear departed so much as the knowledge that a deserved tribute had been paid to "that honorable profession [striking his breast], that honorable and self-sacrificing body of men through whose efforts he had been allowed to enjoy the good things of life years after it was thought impossible by the members of the clergy—meaning no disrespect to that honored body, of course."

It was true that plain, homely, life-loving Phineas had never shown any particular fondness for his pale, cadaverous clergyman; while he had been devoted to his

rubicund doctor, who had possessed the decided advantage of being able to sit down to a quiet "rubber" now and then. So Dr. Snowborough had the best of the argument until one day a letter arrived from a far-away town in the depths of Colorado suggesting that Devil's Gulch was the proper place to be the recipient of Mrs. Root's "munificent gift." Devil's Gulch, so the letter stated, was the place where the late Phineas had first struck gold, and what could be more fitting, than that a palatial art museum be erected there? The mayor of Devil's Gulch was convinced that the presence of such an art museum would do much towards doing away with the erection of gambling dens—he regretted the undue proportion of them at present—and he ended with a magnificent peroration upon the means of securing such a museum. He knew through excellent authority that the Italian government was

quite ready to give up the art treasures of the Vatican and the Pitti Palace to American enterprise (if backed by the necessary cash), and he would stake his professional reputation upon the success and glory attached to such an unprecedented achievement. Besides, the glory of Colorado would thus be assured. The late Phineas Root was an American, and he was proud of it! To give a memorial to the effete civilization of the East is to knuckle down basely before the prejudices of the European aristocracy. The West, the wild, the free, the glorious West, is the only real America, etc., etc.

Now, to the thorough-going New Yorker there is a potent and mysterious charm in giving money far away; it would be inexplicable otherwise that so many of the great magnates of the metropolis love to put up all sorts of memorials throughout the length and breadth of the land—in Nevada,

Colorado, Tennessee, Maine, anywhere, but in the city which ought to claim, at least a portion of their allegiance. Perhaps it is because New York attracts to itself all the wealth of this vast country and each millionaire keeps in his heart a soft corner for his native home. He that gained his wealth through the richness of California's soil, is not apt to forget his debt ; he that owes it to the coals of Pennsylvania, gives generously to that anthracite quarter ; and he that has cause to bless the hams of Cincinnati, or the beef of Chicago, forgets not to show his thankfulness. Although his body is comfortably ensconced in New York, his heart is never there for a moment.

There was a peculiar fascination about the argument used by the mayor of Devil's Gulch. Let us not go too deeply into the why and the wherefore, suffice it to say that the two doctors began to scent a powerful rival in the field, and their efforts were renewed

with even more than their former enthusiasm. It was agreed between them that they should permit the erection of two memorials, anything rather than let the coveted gift slip altogether out of their grasp.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Root fell ill with a trouble that seemed to baffle the greatest efforts of her physician. The days went by and it looked as if the great memorial would have to include one for herself as well. But Mrs. Root did not hanker after that distinction, and she listened eagerly when a friend assured her that there was only one way of being cured and that was by changing her physician and taking Dr. Brent, a woman doctor. Of this particular Dr. Brent the friend related the most wonderful tales of marvelous cures: there was Mrs. A., who had not walked for years until Dr. Brent took her in hand; Mrs. C., who had been utterly miserable until Dr. Brent performed a most

dangerous operation upon her. In short, Mrs. Root's ears were filled with so many stories of the fame and success of Dr. Brent, that, conservative as she was, and not quite sure that she approved of "those women doctors," she followed in the footsteps of the fashion, and the new doctor was appealed to.

The story goes on to tell that Dr. Brent successfully performed an operation on Mrs. Root, who from that time became the doctor's most devoted slave—hence the final outcome of the much discussed "Root Memorial." For once rumor was to be trusted, Dr. Brent had really performed an exceedingly difficult and dangerous operation, and although it was not two years since her return from Europe, where she had been studying, it was true that she was justly celebrated for the treatment of her own sex. It is needless to say that the fame of Dr. Brent was immeasurably increased by the

fact that she had successfully operated upon a woman with thirty millions—the presence of so many millions requiring extraordinary skill, of course. Divine power of wealth! Far-reaching, embracing into its magic circle myriads of lesser mortals, glorified by the remotest contact with it! Poor, plain, little Miss Perkins is taken up enthusiastically because she teaches the alphabet to the red-haired, diminutive descendants of the glorious Phineas; Miss Cuticle is the rage because it is discovered that to her falls the difficult task of being manicure to thirty millions (rather confusing rhetoric, but justified by usage in the *Daily Sensation*, the *Weekly Shock*, and other standard journals of the day); the milliner and dressmaker of Mrs. Root are sure to share the effulgent halo, notwithstanding the execrable taste of their celebrated customer. Then there was the talented young Brush, who never had suc-

ceeded in selling a picture until his "Love in a Cottage" had been discovered hanging upon the "sumptuous walls of Mrs. Root's palatial mansion"; and there was Brick, the architect, who has made his fortune since he designed the garden-house that "graces the magnificent lawn of Mrs. Root's dreamlike palace at Newport." Again, say I, "Oh, glorious power of wealth, all hail!"

To go back to the laying of the corner-stone, as I have said before, the crowd was a very fashionable one. Dr. Brent's feat was no ordinary triumph; there was not only the triumph of wresting the memorial from the hands of those Devil's Gulch people, and of actually persuading a New Yorker to let her money remain within the city limits; but there was the additional triumph on top of that of securing a gift from a woman in the cause of women. Especially in the line of education; it had so long been the tradition of

wealthy women to swell the coffers of educational institutions at which the just rights of their own sex had been persistently ignored, that this action of Mrs. Root in founding a woman's college electrified the city.

Then there was also the superb triumph of having the great Dr. Thaddeus Manning address the meeting, to be seen publicly championing the cause of woman's progress. Dr. Manning had done his very best to shut out women from the advantages of the Fudge Hospital for Women, of whose medical board he was the honored president. Some years before Dr. Brent had refused to be conquered; and had made her way in as a modest interne. It seems that the persevering Dr. Brent had raked up a pretty bit of scandal and there threatened to arise a good deal of talk. She had discovered that the hospital owed its endowment to an eccentric old lady, who twenty years before

had had enough faith in her sex to found the hospital in the interests of women, for their treatment, and for their clinical instruction. Trusting Miss Fudge had departed this earth before the building was completed, and had reposed perfect confidence in old Dr. Manning, the father of the present doctor, who for some reason totally ignored the wishes of the departed Miss Fudge, and no woman medical student or physician had ever been permitted to enter the sacred precincts. But now Dr. Thaddeus Manning could no longer stand up against current opinion, and he was clever enough to give way in time to save himself from ungallant defeat. Lately the shrewd doctor (who could measure the pulse of the times as well as of his patients) had put himself upon the top crest of popularity by inviting Dr. Brent to meet him in consultation over the case of a well-known society lady.

The trustees of the Fudge Hospital for Women had become very much agitated when the rumor was circulated that Dr. Brent had secured the magnificent Root Memorial to endow a great hospital and college for women. The board of trustees, backed by the medical board, reconsidered its past policy and unanimously elected Dr. Brent attending physician. But it was too late: Dr. Brent was not to be caught so easily as that. She was shrewd enough to see that Dr. Brent, comparatively unknown and wanting to serve as interne, was quite a different being from Dr. Brent, well known, popular, and bearing in her hands the Root millions.

The great event of the day was the new president's address, the president of the Root Memorial. As she stood there bowing before the enthusiastic audience (she could see the exquisitely gloved hands of Dr. Manning clapping

approval), she was a woman to bring a glow of enthusiasm to anyone's heart. To look at her you would never suspect she was guilty of having graduated from a co-educational college, of having served as the only woman interne in the Fudge Hospital, of having gone to Germany alone and braved the medical lions in their dens, of having been the one woman that the great and only Professor Schwetterberger had consented to instruct, and of having performed, on her return to America, difficult gynecological operations, the success of which had interested the entire medical profession—operations that required nerve, coolness, daring, skill, a steady hand and a delicate one; and when they were over she had never been known either to faint or go into hysterics, as in the past Dr. Manning had prophesied would be the conduct of the woman physician.

As she stood there, she looked

like a very handsome, amiable woman, surely not past thirty, and very tastefully and quietly dressed. Her fine figure and beautiful face made her a walking commentary on the usual opinion that "Mind is an enemy to beauty." Thin, sallow, over-worked school ma'ams, and big, striding women reporters, who themselves failed obviously to maintain the proper mental and physical equilibrium, always pointed to Dr. Brent as a refutation of a theory that they might be presumed to prove. One of the evening papers gave the following description (and by the way, before I quote it, I wonder why it is that newspaper reporters always go into the details of a woman's dress, whether at a suffrage caucus or a prayer meeting? Just fancy the papers containing an account of a costume worn by the Hon. Grover Cleveland when he delivers an address on some auspicious occasion.

Fancy having the mind distracted by the color of his necktie or the check of his trousers. And yet, let his wife show herself for a moment and her dress is pounced upon, every detail is seized and we are regaled the following day by a wonderful description of the—upon each occasion—handsomest and most tasteful costume she has yet worn. I beg their pardon; they would not descend to such vulgar English. I should have said “that had yet adorned the lovely figure”).

The extract from the *Evening Whirl* reads thus, and, allowing for a certain amount of reportorial hyperbole, it is a pretty fair account:

The scene beggars description; the metropolis' fairest dames and haughtiest seigneurs were on hand. The Four Hundred, led by its genial leader, was there. Who was not there? Surely no one would care to confess one's absence. . . . A strange sight was witnessed by the representative of the *Evening Whirl*. A man worth \$100,000,000 stood uncon-

sciously gazing at the sight, shoulder to shoulder with an Irish hod-carrier. Two things were especially notable: the hod-carrier did not look at all abashed, and the fact that the man who could sign a check for \$100,000,000 should be obliged to stand up.

The report goes on to say:

Of course our lady readers will want to know all about the successful winner of the Root Memorial Prize. . . . Dr. Brent stood confidently upon the platform, perfectly at her ease. She is superbly tall, and the figure of a very Juno. The expression of her face is peculiarly soft and winning; yet the high forehead, unmarred by either bang or curl, and the rather square jaw, betoken the presence of will and determination. Her orbs are of a lustrous, deep sapphire, and her hair, which was simply caught up in a loose coil, and fastened with a large tortoise-shell pin, is of a rare golden chestnut shade. Many were surprised who now, for the first time, were looking upon the renowned pupil of Professor Schwetterberger. . . . To complete the picture, I will add that Dr. Brent was clad in a garment of some sort of soft, clinging material of sapphire blue, just the color to bring out her deep eyes (but then we do not dare accuse the learned doctor of possessing any of the

weaknesses of her sex); while upon the golden chestnut crest reposed a dainty little bonnet of dark-blue straw, and we will add that its strings were neatly tied, and not hanging in a slovenly stream down her back, as, doubtless, some of those present expected to see them.

The address of the new president was a masterly one, and no one was disappointed, not even her warmest admirers. She began with an account of the position of women in medicine half a century ago, and gave a concise, but wonderfully interesting sketch of their heroic efforts to obtain recognition. The time was past when women had to struggle for the legal right to practice, or for recognition from the medical organizations; but the present problem was to enable women to obtain the best possible training for the profession. She drew a vivid picture of the early struggles of the pioneer women doctors to pick up the necessary knowledge in stray crumbs, eagerly going

hither and thither, thankful for whatever little was thrown to them. She led up to the present day, when women have received so much that nothing but the very best ought to have any significance. The day of crumb picking has gone. The need of to-day is the very best training, equal to that received by the profession. But the new college would not be content with following the institutions at which men received their training. It would not be a mere repetition; it was going to open out a new field of work to American physicians; it would hold up the very highest scientific standards, and it was hoped that the men would follow in their track.

She ended with these words, spoken from her very soul:

“And yet it has been proved, I think, that woman, in assuming these new duties and responsibilities, need not cast aside any of the great responsibilities which she has inherited from the past ages.

The new womanhood is a development, an enriching of the old womanhood—not, in any sense, a narrowing down, nor a dwarfing of our noblest conceptions. It means growth in every direction.”

As she uttered those words, evidently struggling to suppress emotion, her eyes met the glance of a young man who stood in the crowd leaning up against a lamp-post, and who had been watching her earnestly. Dr. Brent’s eyes fell to the ground, and some say they saw tears in them.

The applause burst forth rapturously, there was even some faint suggestion of cheering, so deeply had her speech awakened interest and sympathy. The man who stood watching her shut his eyes in pain when the loud applause broke out, and shrugged his shoulders angrily. However, he was the first one to reach the platform and congratulate her. He looked straight into her face, as he said, in a low voice:

“Helen, I wish I could honest-

ly wish you happiness in your new career."

Helen flushed and then turned pale, so pale that someone offered her a chair, saying, "I am afraid you have overestimated your strength." And the young man repeated, but with a new significance :

"Yes, I fear Dr. Brent has overestimated her strength," and lifting his hat politely, he was soon making his way through the throng of people that gathered to offer congratulations.





II.

WHEN Helen had returned from Europe, Harold Skidmore had been one of the first to call upon her. Although he had broken their engagement when she had taken her doctor's degree, he yet hoped to conquer and to regain his old influence over her. Their affection for each other had begun way back when they were school children together, and he had been very miserable while she was abroad and had resolved to do whatever he could to bring her to reason. He was not at fault; he had only done what any man would have done.

She greeted him very calmly

and they had discussed the usual conventional nothings that are the refuge of embarrassed people. At last, upon looking about the cosy study, and seeing her seated there so happily, so much as if she belonged there, and meant to remain there, Harold reached forth blindly, helplessly, across the chasm which he felt was cruelly widening as time went on. He was irritated at seeing her so beautiful and so strong. He had expected, now it was clear to him that he had hoped, that she would return worn out, tired of struggling, vexed by the cold hostilities of the German professors, and ready to fall into his protecting arms, for rest and peace. And what a rude tumble for his dream! He was sensible enough to see that there was no sympathy, no protection needed here. That smiling, calm woman sitting opposite him had the appearance of having walked all her life through a path of smiles and roses. He

was conscious of a bit of humor in the situation. Where had fled all his masculine sense of superior power?

"So," he exclaimed, suddenly, looking about the room. "So you are here, really launched forth on your career?" He could not resist adding, "are you happy?"

"Very," quietly answered Helen.

"And so you really intend to settle down here a determined old maid, and have no greater outlook into the future than pursuing your profession and living here all alone?"

"Is it worth while to revive all this painful discussion?" she asked.

"Painful?" Harold repeated, pettishly. "I never thought it was painful to you."

"Then you are very unjust."

"No, a woman that can deliberately give up a man's love, a wife's sphere, the only true and real life for a woman, is not capable of suffering. If you really loved me, you would have given

up all this, your ambition, your profession—everything. That is love.”

“Is it?”

“Is it? How can you ask such a question? That only goes to prove——”

“I repeat, is it a man’s love? I am aware that it is a man’s idea of what a woman’s love ought to be—for him. But it is very different from his conception of what his own love ought to be.”

“Pshaw!”

“What man is capable of giving up all his ideals—the life for which he knows himself best fitted—of giving up his ambition, everything that makes life worth struggling for, that lifts it from mere animal existence, to give this all up for his love? To begin with, it is never demanded, so you men are never honestly put to the test. But once tried, I do not believe I know one man that would relinquish all this—what you now blandly wave aside as ‘every-

thing' for the love of any woman, to attain the sphere of a husband, a father, the only true and real life for any noble man."

"Helen, how you go on! The idea of comparing the ambition of a man, his very career, his bread-winning, with the day dreams of a woman."

"There you are. A man looks upon his own aims as justifiable, serious. Nothing must come in their way to thwart them. But a woman! She can have no aims; they are but idle whims, dreams, hobbies—what you will. It seems to me so futile to discuss it all over now after all these years. It was clear to me when you broke our engagement five years ago that we were utterly unsympathetic, and that is the end of it. Any man that considers a woman's life as less real, less earnest, less important, in every way than his own, can never be the man I could marry. You know I am no actress, Harold; you know I have

never pretended to have forgot or grown out of my love for you. I have been always ready to say: 'I love you.' You will never appreciate what my decision cost me, but I cannot, I have no right to put aside my whole life, to sink my entire past and future into oblivion to suit your prejudices, for they amount to nothing more nor less."

"But let us seriously discuss it, Helen: haven't you really put it out of my power to marry you? How could you possibly attend to household duties; how could you call your time your own, much less mine; how much of yourself could you give up to home life, without giving up your practice?"

"I have before answered all this. I think marriage means the yielding of a great deal from both man and woman. Again I repeat that I would give up a great deal. I am prepared to make certain sacrifices, as a wife. On the contrary, you, as a husband, are ready

to make none, cannot even see that there could possibly be any occasion to make any on your part. Is it not so? I have said I am willing to confine myself purely to consultation work and to performing operations. A consulting surgeon has great command over the disposal of her time."

Harold shuddered to think of his wife coming to him fresh from performing an operation, smelling of ether and carbolic acid.

"I shall name my own appointments, and while you are busy down town you will probably never see nor hear anything directly of them. I am confident I can combine this with the arduous duties of a housewife, even if I accept the clinic at the hospital. You know I am very strong. I don't promise you, mind you, to descend into the kitchen and bake the bread myself, but I do promise you that you'll get it of a fine and digestible quality."

Harold smiled. "This would be Elysium, but I wish I could believe you. I confess it scents of fairyland to me to hear you honestly say that you could be a doctor and not neglect things at home."

Helen rose. "I warned you that there was not the slightest use of our going over the ground again. Let us agree never to bring this up again, otherwise I cannot consent to see you. I cannot go over and over it; it is to no purpose."

Harold rose also, but remained sullenly silent.

"Can you not see," she continued, "how impossible it is that we shall ever agree? I shall shock you very much, I am afraid, but I may as well tell you I think you have just as much right to ask me to give up my profession as I have to ask you to give up yours."

This did surprise Harold, who slowly sat down again.

“What! you really think that? You go to ridiculous extremes.”

“Why not? Have we not both devoted our lives, our hopes, and thoughts to our professions? Are we not both remorselessly ambitious, or to put it in another way, are we not both determined to leave the world better than we found it; are we not both convinced that not only we need our profession, but that our profession needs us? And suppose I said to you, ‘I am afraid to marry you; surely you will neglect me; the stress of your profession must necessarily take you a great deal away. I don’t want to have to sit at home while you are busy down town, detained by an important case; I do not wish to be left behind when you are obliged to take flying trips to Washington and Albany; I dare not link my life to yours unless you will give up your law, unless you go into some humdrum business that will permit you to devote

yourself to your wife.' What would you think of me? How would you answer me? And yet I think your wife would be compelled to make as many sacrifices as my husband would. Where is the difference, only that I have faith, and you have not?"

"Absurd! preposterous! is it not the man that is the natural breadwinner?"

"Ah! so even you fall back on that old argument. How delightfully American! Money-making, then, is to be the *summum bonum* of life. The value of an individual lies in the amount of money he or she can make? Then you would require a man that writes the most exquisite poetry to give up the pen and rock the cradle, for his wife can probably make more by taking in washing."

Harold put out his hand deprecatingly. "How you run on," he said. "However, I cannot attempt to change the world. It is

generally conceded that a man's career is more important than his wife's. It is so in the nature of things."

Helen made answer, "Then I shall never marry until I can find the man that together with me will be courageous enough to try to change the world." She held out her hand, "Good-by."

Harold took her hand. "You are entering upon a futile search."

Helen smiled.

"I did not mean to leave you with the impression that it was to be my sphere in life, to carry on such a search." She might have made a different answer. She might have said she had found that man in Germany (of all countries!) but her love for Harold had been too strong. It would have been a life of peace, of sympathy—there was respect, a good deal of affection. It was a temptation, but she knew her heart beat at the thought, the sight, the touch of another man.



III.

AFTER this conversation Harold had left Helen in anger ; he had left her feeling as if all love were crushed out by her remorseless ambition, by her determination to go on with her life work. He flung himself angrily into his bachelor apartments. She was unworthy of any further thought, and that was the end of it. She was cold, she did not love him ; at least he tried to persuade himself that was true, but he failed. His better self told him how utterly absurd it was to lay the blame on that. She did love him and he knew it. She loved him. He thought of the days,

now so long gone by, when they had lived for nothing better than each other's presence. The recollection of it all filled him with a half-painful, half-pleasurable thrill. Well, there was no use thinking over the past ; she might love him, but she was utterly incapable of making sacrifices for him. She loved herself better than him.

He sat a long time, in his big armchair, trying to put himself in her place. He thought over his own strong hopes and ambitious plans for the future, he reflected what it would mean to him to give up his profession, to sink his whole past with its memories, to give up his Lawyer's Club, his speech before the Society for Municipal Purity that very night ; to renounce all his congenial associates, to sink all his dearest interests and go into some humdrum business. He began to have some faint conception of Helen's position, began to appreciate what he was demanding of her. Hers was

no ordinary woman's fad ; she did not take up her profession in that half-hearted, dilletante fashion as so many women did. And why did they ? Because they believed marriage would put an end to it, and they hated to give up their hopes of married life. It certainly was natural that such an attitude should interfere with their earnestness in taking up a profession as an end in itself. Could he have worked so hard, so faithfully, had marriage appeared to him as a wall looming up in the future cutting off every other interest, every other ambition ? Marriage, to him, had always meant renewed effort, a greater stimulus for success.

A little reflection and Harold was able to forget a great deal of his bitterness toward Helen. He could even sympathize with her, he could—what could he do ? Go back and say, " Take me, only marry me, and let me share a small part of your heart. Let me come

in for a portion of your interest, side by side with your practice, your hospital, your scientific researches." Could he do that? Would any man? Impossible! It might be very hard on women, it might be unjust (he was almost ready to admit it) that they should have to make such a painful decision between their love and their ambition, their heart and their brain; but what could he do? How could he help it? Were not men and women born to marry? Had not one or the other to give up outside interests? how else could a home be made; a family reared? Could it be that it was the duty of the husband to remain home and take care of the cradle and socks, while the wife attended to her professional duties? The world might be awry; he was sorry for it, but would it be any less so if the men bore the brunt of it?

Suppose he let the future take care of itself? Suppose he defied it and reached forth his hands to

grasp all that the present contained for him of joy and happiness? Suppose he forgot Helen, the physician; Helen, with her theories; Helen, with her ambitions; suppose he only remembered Helen, the woman; Helen, with the white skin; Helen, with the red lips; Helen with the bright, blue eyes? Only remembered his passionate desire to close all arguments with kisses, to crush her in his arms and feel her palpitating against him? Well, and what then? Suppose he subdued her? Suppose she yielded to him, what would the future have in store for them both? Would they be able to crush those terrible moments which would be sure to follow, moments when everyday life would interpose with thoughts of life's earnest duties, of duties forgotten, of powers wasted? There could be nothing but final misery to them, unless marriage could mean between them a long life of sympathetic friendship, of self-respect;

a union with the consciousness of duty performed.

To accept from a woman the sacrifice of her professional life is almost as dangerous to future happiness as to accept from her the sacrifice of her honor. Helen had once said :

“ Harold, if you conquer, and I marry you with your present ideas of woman’s duties, if that means I am to give up my whole professional ambition, my sense of what I owe it and the world, if I am to sink my whole existence into being your wife, I shall feel degraded. I shall feel as much so as if I had lost the respect of the world. It would mean to me the victory of passion over reason, of my inclinations over my sense of duty. If I could honestly bring myself to believe that a woman’s proper field is marriage, and that every other object in life ought to be waived for that, it would be easy for me. But I cannot. I have accomplished

enough in my work to justify me in feeling that I have a mission, a duty to perform ; to give this all up for you, is to make myself fall utterly in my eyes, and I could never be happy without the respect of my own self. To me it is more important than the respect of all the rest of the world."

He could understand this, as if he gave up his profession and all his higher instincts to follow in the footsteps of some frivolous courtesan, as if he had allowed his love to swallow up every other sentiment that a man is capable of cherishing. Well, it was hard on her, it was hard on him. It was too bad that life was not so constituted that two such people could marry, neither one giving up the necessary intellectual life, each separate, independent, yet united, blest with love and all else besides that makes life worth living.



IV.

DR. BRENT stood a moment before entering the great door of the Root Memorial Hospital. Glancing at the noble cluster of buildings she could not repress a sigh of mingled contentment and relief. It was almost fairyland to her; it meant the realization of her most dearly cherished dream.

To begin with, there was the college, which not only ranked with any medical college in the country, but did away with a great deal of the necessity of going abroad for the higher scientific training. The staff of instructors included many of the

most noted specialists of the day. Among the envious or scoffing there was a good deal of fun poked at the "importations" for the great Root Memorial, for there were a number of German and Swedish professors, all of them members of the sterner sex. The Root Memorial was really founded to advance the medical education of women, not to provide for them remunerative positions, but to give them the very best instruction that could be had, so Dr. Brent did not believe in the necessity for women professors, and preferred to have the best irrespective of sex. For this she was severely censured by many, who said they thought the Root Memorial was to be a "College for Women." No one admired her own sex more than Dr. Brent; she thought they had done grandly considering the meager opportunities for study that had been granted them in the past. But that did not mean that they

had received sufficient training to be already foremost in every department of learning, especially in one that requires so much training as medicine. There was quite a little passage at arms between Dr. Brent and Miss Keating, of Kansas (or rather I should have said her friends, who seemed more indignant than the abused party herself), because Miss Keating, the glory of Kansas, was asked to be an assistant to Professor Herrgoberger in the chemical laboratory. Miss Keating, an assistant, indeed! There were not lacking plenty of people to say that Dr. Brent was jealous of the rest of her own sex.

But all this small talk was a matter of complete indifference to Helen. How could she have room to consider such petty annoyances when she had so much to be really thankful for and so much demand for active work? In the college building were superbly equipped laboratories;

a student could take a full course in chemistry, physics, botany, and zoölogy, and there were separate laboratories where really advanced work was encouraged. There were fellowships in abundance, and everything possible was done to foster the sentiment that the regulation three years did not mean the end of all study, and that the study of medicine did not necessarily mean merely preparation for active practice. It was Dr. Brent's great hope to instill into America something of the German love of science for itself, of a life spent in investigation, calm, slow, patient, but thorough, and culminating often in really great discoveries.

In the hospital were all the latest improvements; everything that could in any way promote the comfort of the patients or supplement the skill of the physician. Besides the college and the hospital, there was the training school for nurses adjoin-

ing. It was a homelike place, and everything possible was done to make the lives of the nurses pleasant and domestic. There was a committee interested in the training school, which did splendid work among the poorer quarters, trying to impress among the many poorly paid, overworked shopwomen the advantages of adopting the profession of trained nurse, but strange to say it was hard work to persuade that class of women that there was not something essentially immoral in the calling.

Indeed, Helen had cause to stand proudly before the magnificent buildings. Her three years since the laying of the cornerstone had been well spent. It had been a fearful strain. Mrs. Root was not satisfied unless every detail was supervised by Dr. Brent. First there had come up the question of selecting from the vast numbers of plans that had come in during the competi-

tion, which was open to all. The choice had fallen upon a well-known architect established in his profession many years; a man! and thereby Helen had called down upon herself a shower of criticism. She had actually rejected the plans of a woman architect! Many women had thought it outrageous that the competition should be open to men; this was to be a woman's hospital, and it ought to be used to advance women in every way. This and the famous Keating controversy before mentioned spread abroad the general impression that Dr. Brent was not really interested in the progress of her sex, and there were not a few that were quite ready to affirm that she was jealous of the success attained by any woman other than herself. We must not be too hard upon Helen's critics. Her faith to the trust to make the Root Memorial the best of its kind naturally met

with little sympathy from such women as had swelled themselves with pride and gratification at the chance of really shutting out their opponents, the men. There was held a large meeting of a well-known Women's Club at which a radiant prophet had drawn a picture of what the Root Memorial would mean to women. It is almost unnecessary to add that it was a picture which drew forth rapturous applause.

First, there would be superb buildings designed by a woman architect; then there would be the hospital managed entirely by a board of women directors—even the treasurer would be a woman (and the speaker made highly felicitous and original allusion to the woman treasurer who would not be so apt to take sudden excursions into Canada); the doctors would be women, even from internes to consulting physicians, and the operations all by women surgeons. There would

be no man cooks. She didn't know but that a capable janitress might do away with the usual incapable and shiftless janitor. But the climax was reached with the description of the college—a college wherein the very best instruction could be obtained by women. Where not only the students, but all the instructors would be women. Who dared deny that such women existed? Was there not the renowned Miss Keating and hosts of others nearly her equal?

That meeting was voted by all the most successful ever held. Fancy the chagrin when Dr. Brent not only refused to accept honorary membership extended by the club, but announced the plan of the institution in a prominent magazine and publicly deplored that kind of sentimentality which, actuated by an emotional, unreasoning love of Woman (always with a capital W), was fascinated by the magic name

and was blinded to what really makes for the best interests not only of Woman, but of humanity. Dr. Brent had a contempt for that sort of sexual rivalry that goes on so bitterly among a certain class of women, that kind of rivalry which is so ardent that faults as well as virtues are copied in the eager race after similitude.

It is impossible to relate all the numerous wearisome struggles which Helen had to undergo with this form of sentimentality in woman. In truth Helen was broad, in a way in which very few women are broad; restrictions and forced limitations had failed to embitter her. She still cared more for the development of humanity than for the development of woman, more for the progress of civilization than for the progress of a certain portion of it. She believed that every real and earnest advance made by women must mean real advance made by the entire world, but it must *be*

real advance. I am almost afraid to say it, for I naturally want my heroine to be popular, but I suspect Helen was really more interested in the fact that the Root Memorial Hospital and College would advance the condition of medical preparation all over the country, in the fact that it encouraged original research, and inculcated the love of science, for science's sake, not for breadwinning only; I suspect very strongly that she cared more for the Root Memorial because it accomplished all this, than (dare I breathe it?) merely because it was another college open to women without restrictions. In fact the board of trustees was soon earnestly discussing the question of opening the college to men students, as numerous applications had been made. Dr. Brent's critics were busy making up their minds whether to be most tickled at the thought of men applying for admission to a woman's college, or indignant

that the policy of retaliation would not be pursued. But again Helen's interest in humanity, rather than in Woman, showed itself. If the Root Memorial did stand for something not elsewhere obtainable, if its greatness was felt so strongly as to make men beg for its priveleges, why surely to deny their entrance would be to deprive a large part of humanity from a great source of growth. It would be a cheap kind of revenge, while the granting of the request would be a sublime move onward.

Fortunate it was for Helen that her life was so full of duties that there had been no time to repine or to reflect bitterly upon the past. She could not shut out the memory of Harold from her heart, do what she would, but then it was a great blessing to have a rich, full life—not that for a moment she ever deceived herself into believing it was a complete life. She often thought she could never

have borne her decision had she been an author or a poet, had she not thrown herself, heart and soul, into the profession that takes one most out of one's self. What a deep pity she felt for Aurora, "laboring on alone."

To sit alone,
And think for comfort, how that very
 night,
Affianced lovers, leaning face to face
With sweet half-listenings for each other's
 breath,
Are reading haply from some page of
 ours.

There was not much "sitting alone" for busy Dr. Brent. Professional calls, grave operations, tri-weekly lectures, board meetings, committee meetings, meetings of the dozens of societies to which she belonged, work in the laboratory and the reading of, and writing for medical journals, left little time for such thoughts. She was in the rush, the stress, the whirl of life; not a day passed without its demand upon her ac-

tive sympathies, upon her hand, her brain, and her heart. Did she regret the great decision that had shaped her life? Regret? No, not in the sense that she would she had done differently. There was a regret, however, a deep-seated, passionate regret that such a struggle of the dual nature of woman should ever be necessary. There was within her a fierce longing that her whole nature could rise and expand, grow as it was intended it should grow—full, proportioned, equable, beautifully rich in all the blessings of life; not warped, thwarted, stunted, as she could not but realize it was. And yet, what was there to be done? Could she ever have been happy had her decision been different? She knew that life was not complete to her, but she also knew it would have been far less complete, less satisfying, had she subdued the intellectual rather than the emotional side of her nature. No, there was absolutely

nothing for women to do to help on the solution of this great problem of marriage. The change must come from men. They must be educated to allow greater liberty of thought and action in their wives, to seek in them companionship in marriage, to seek sympathetic co-operation, not merely physical gratification, nor the mere oiling of the household machinery.

Dr. Brent delivered her lecture on gynecology and then stepped into one of the chemical laboratories. There she found a young girl bending over her desk, evidently deeply absorbed in the experiment she was carrying on. A handsome young German professor stood watching the scene. He came up to Helen—

“Pardon me, but Fräulein Bayley is killing herself. I can never get her to go home at reasonable hours to her meals.”

The young girl looked up, with

a bright laugh. Her face was not beautiful, but it was full of enthusiasm and earnestness. Helen smiled.

"Come, Lotus, dear, it is time to go home. Moderation is your first duty. Remember you ruin the cause of your entire sex if you break down in the midst of your experiments. All the world will pat itself on the back and say, 'Aha, did we not always say women were not fit for chemistry?'"

Lotus hastily washed some glasses, put away her instruments in her desk, rushed for her cloak and her hat, and soon was accompanying Helen to their home.





V.

LOTUS BAYLEY lived with Helen, and they were deeply attached to one another. Lotus's mother had been one of Dr. Brent's most fashionable patients. One day she brought Lotus to the office.

"Doctor," she said. "My daughter here is killing herself."

Dr. Brent looked at the well rounded figure and the bright, gray eyes of the daughter and smiled.

"Really," protested the mother. "She is very headstrong and she will persist in going on with those ridiculous studies of hers. Just as if a daughter of mine has any

need to be poring over her books all day ! ”

The doctor passed one quiet, sympathetic look upon the young girl, a look that won her at once.

“ Of what does she complain ? ” she asked, with a slight emphasis on the pronoun.

Mrs. Bayley blushed faintly, and replied with some heat, “ Why, she doesn’t eat well, and she’s growing round shouldered and pale, and she doesn’t get time to see any of her friends. ”

“ Quite a category of complaints. May I ask you, Mrs. Bayley, does your daughter attend gymnasium ? ”

Lotus gave a sudden, grateful look, which lit up her large gray eyes.

“ Gymnasium, doctor? Great Heavens! I have come to you to make her do less, and now you actually suggest something else. ”

“ Why, it does not seem to me that college can possibly take up

all her time." Lotus now spoke for herself:

"Mother, we ought to tell the doctor of our compromise. When mother permitted me to attend college, I, on my part, promised to take embroidery lessons every day, and not to neglect my calls." Mrs. Bayley looked just a little foolish.

"Well, you couldn't expect me to consent to her being brought up like a heathen." Dr. Brent looked grave, then taking Lotus's hand in hers, and drawing the young girl up to her, she said:

"Mrs. Bayley, you must pardon me if I seem abrupt. I think you know me well enough to know that I do not often lecture. Permit me, this once, however, to speak my mind frankly." Mrs. Bayley nodded; Lotus stared. The doctor continued: "I have had brought to me any number of cases of nervous prostration. Very few of these have been brought about by over-study. In

fact, I may say really none of them have been so brought about. I have, on the contrary, seen hundreds of cases where the breakdown has been caused by over-dissipation. I have seen pneumonias resulting from the absurdly inadequate clothing of the fashionable evening world; I have seen severe anæmia resulting from irregular hours and consequent loss of sleep; I have seen many other troubles brought on by the constant strain that social duties lay upon the entire nervous system. I have also had many mothers bring me what they called cases of over-study. For these, however, there have generally been quite other causes for the breakdown than the one given. I shall explain. You allow your eldest daughter, Rose, to enter society in full swing. You are pleased if she enters it body and soul. If she has been up late the night before, you permit her to sleep well into the day. If she is

tired from the waltz, you are glad if she will rest upon the sofa until it is time for her to dress for a luncheon or a tea. If she has young friends with whom she is congenial you seek to bring her in contact with them. Everything is done to make her surroundings congenial and to smooth the difficulties in her path. You will pardon me if I say that the same consideration is rarely shown to the daughter that goes to college. If, after a struggle, she finally succeeds in securing the consent of her parents, she goes, indeed, but everything is done to make her feel that she has done something out of the way; that she is, in fact, an abnormal creature to prefer books and learning to society and pleasure. Is she permitted to throw herself heart and soul into her life, as her sister into hers? On the contrary, is there not usually a constant friction going on at home? If she wishes to pass the

evening quietly in her room studying (a pastime which is not half so dreadful as it is made out, not half so dangerous to health as dancing half-naked in the ball-room) she is not only supposed to be killing herself with overwork, but is gently reminded that her dreadful, studious ways are breaking up the life of the family. Life of the family, indeed! How much is there of it, I should like to know, when like as not, on descending to the parlor, our student finds some visitor chatting idly and insipidly with the elder sister, while all the others sit around and pretend not to be bored. Why must all the life of the family center about the society girl? Why must our tired mothers be dragged to the ball to watch over dear Aurelia? why must the entire family be made uncomfortable in some overcrowded summer hotel because it is the fashion and dear Aurelia must be in the swim? Why, there

would be absolutely no girls in college to-day, if their going made one-third the commotion that is made by the girl going out into society. What are we to judge from all this? I am afraid nothing else than that the sole end of a girl's existence is to make a brilliant match, and that a girl who is foolish or whimsical enough to care for any other end of existence must be put down, and reminded at every turn how foolish she is and how much more rational and affable and womanly is her sister.

"Well, Mrs. Bayley, this is quite a long lecture, much longer than I had originally intended. I am afraid I got too much warmed up with my subject. Now let me prescribe for your daughter, for after all that is what you came for, and not to listen to a lecture by me. Well, I shall write you one." The doctor turned to her desk, and wrote for a few moments, then turning to Mrs. Bayley, she handed her a bit of

folded paper upon which was written the prescription. Mrs. Bayley opened it and read :

R Loose, sensible, plain gowns.

Gymnasium at least twice weekly.

Horseback or bicycle tri-weekly for an hour in morning, after light breakfast.

Early hours for retiring.

Liberty to seek the quiet of her room, if desired.

Liberty to seek the companionship of her classmates.





VI.

IT was not very long after Lotus's introduction to Helen that the engagement of her pretty sister, Rose, was announced. Rose was the heroine of the hour. She had secured "the greatest catch in town," and she attained to that great height of feminine grandeur—to be envied by everyone of her bosom friends. There had been some unkind rumors to the effect that Rose had been in love with a struggling young lawyer, who had since gone West, but surely that was only the revenge of some of the envious ones. Who could have hesitated between being

plain Mrs. John Brown, with five thousand a year, or Mrs. Mortimer Stuart Verplanck with \$250,000 a year?

To begin with, the Verplanck family had led the wealth and fashion of the metropolis for generations and generations, and the Stuart family was connected very directly with —, who signed the Declaration of Independence. Signed the Declaration of Independence, indeed? Independence from what? From snobbery? Has anyone ever reflected upon the irony of fate in this modern pride in claiming kinship to some signer of the Declaration of Independence? That boasted ancestor affixed his name in approval of a sentiment that "All men are created equal," and with the last flourish of his pen he innocently and unconsciously conferred upon all of his descendants the "inalienable right" to turn up their aristocratic noses at those lesser mortals that had been unequally

created without such distinguished forefathers.

Then, Mortimer's sister had married an English lord, and Lady Milminme was now the acknowledged belle of London society. Think of the advantage of being received in London as the sister-in-law of the beautiful Lady Milminme and of being entertained at her sumptuous mansion! Can the eloquent pen of the novelist add more to uphold the importance, the fame, the glory of the marriage about to be consummated? Is not everyone of my female readers worked up to the proper pitch of enthusiasm, or will it be necessary for me to add the final touch and state that it was rumored that Lady Milminme's wedding gift to her future sister would be a dinner service in solid gold, and that, owing to the high position of Lord Milminme, the Queen had signified her intention of sending a diamond brooch to the young bride?

I am obliged to reluctantly confess (for, as I have said before, I want my heroine to be popular) that Helen failed to be impressed. I am afraid she would have stood firmly beyond the reach of the most eloquent pen ever possessed by novelist's cunning. What was a greater test: she stood the fire of Mrs. Bayley's eloquence expatiating upon the blissful happiness that had befallen her daughter. Think of resisting the eloquence of a proud mamma, whose eldest is about to marry the wealthiest and handsomest bachelor in New York, the most graceful leader in the german, and—not to be forgot—the brother of Lady Milminme. Her daughter was to marry a man who possessed all these rare and varied qualities that bespoke him a good, devoted and faithful husband, and Helen refused to be impressed. It was cruel. The end of it was, Mrs. Bayley went over to the camp of Dr. Thaddeus Manning. I must

also reluctantly confess—it is always hard to make such a confession, but conscience demands it—that this time my heroine was wrong. It was foolish and willful in her to be blind to all the advantages about to be possessed by the fortunate Rose. But Helen was a physician, we must remember, and she was apt to prize health and strength above all things. And she had warned Mrs. Bayley that Rose might be preparing for herself a very much more miserable future than merely not having enough ball dresses or not possessing a house for the London season. To Dr. Brent, Mortimer Stuart Verplanck was not the handsomest man in New York. He was not handsome at all. In her professional eyes, beauty meant health, and health was one of the last qualities with which Dr. Brent would have credited Mortimer Stuart Verplanck.

The day of the marriage was fast approaching ; each great daily

was vying with the other to secure the most accurate description of the great affair, the most complete list of the guests, and the most detailed account of the wedding presents.

One day Helen sat in her office, completely tired out. She was generally cheerful and strong, but this day she was not only utterly tired, but discouraged, for she had been hunting for a good nurse for one of her patients upon whom she had lately laid the crown of motherhood. It was always a discouraging task to her because of the numbers of miserable women whom she had to interview and the tales of misery she was obliged to listen to. All this crushed her with a keen sense of the misery upon earth, of the injustice of the social standard of morals and her own slight power to remedy it. On this particular day she had examined woman after woman and had been unable to secure what she wanted. It

was late in the afternoon when the doorbell rang and a young girl timidly entered the office. Helen scarcely looked up; she was merely aware that it was a woman without a baby. She asked wearily:

"Where is your baby? I am sick of wasting so much time. I told them at the office not to send any more women unless they brought their babies. You know it is absolutely essential that I examine the baby. Go back and get it and then I'll see you!" The answer came low and hesitating:

"I didn't know."

"Is your baby alive?"

"No, ma'am."

"Humph! That won't do at all. How long did it live?"

"It didn't live at all, ma'am."

"Then you certainly will not do," and Helen leaned back and sighed in a discouraged way. The girl turned away and half

fell, half leaned against a seat, exclaiming below her breath :

“Good Lord, what will become of me ?”

Helen jumped up and ran to the girl.. If she had not been so thoroughly dispirited she never would have permitted her to go without a kind word, without endeavoring in some way to assist her. Now as she looked closely at the girl she noticed the fair skin, the pretty, soft, blond hair that told of former beauty, and the hollow cheeks and sunken eyes that told of present ill-health and misery. “The old, old story,” Helen muttered between her teeth. She drew the girl to her sympathetically, and softly spoke a few words of comfort. The girl continued to cry in a dull, hopeless sort of way :

“This is the third refusal I’ve had to-day. Nobody wants me because my baby didn’t live. It wasn’t my fault.”

"Probably not," muttered Helen.

"I have no place to go and I don't know what will become of me."

Helen patted her hand. "Come, come, we'll get something for you to do. I never failed yet; but my poor girl," she added, looking sharply at her, "the place for you, just now, is the hospital. You mustn't think of taking any position until you are better."

Helen remained closeted with the girl a long time. Then she called a cab and drove with her to the hospital. She was put into Dr. Brent's own service. That night Helen found little sleep. She paced up and down, up and down, with anger and hesitation. A tragic story had been revealed to her, but that was not the worst of it. A doctor, especially a woman doctor, becomes accustomed to these experiences, if she takes any pains to go among the miserable of her

sex. And with Helen this was her greatest work. Never was she more really content with herself than when she was about it. But in this case the cruelty of the social structure of morals was brought before her with particular violence. Here in the hospital now lay a woman whose future was utterly wrecked, whose physical condition was utterly ruined, who, if possibly spared to life, would have no future, no outlook, who would be shunned and pitied (that would be far too mild a word), and the father of her child, where was he? No doubt sitting at this moment in one of the most elegant houses on Fifth Avenue, his arms about a young girl, who was about to unite her fresh, innocent life with his, who yet would have shrunk in horror and disgust from this poor, ruined woman. And what could Dr. Brent do? What could she accomplish, single-handed, against the whole world? Suppose she

were to stand on the housetops and proclaim the story to all. What would that world say? Why, merely that it was very poor taste in Dr. Brent to say all this just while the preparations for the marriage were going on. Why could she not have waited? Waited! That was just what she did not want to do. Wait! Wait until her little friend was bound to this man. Oh, yes; what else was there to do? Suppose she told, would it influence the mother, who was bent upon the match? Did her revelation affect the social position of the man? Did what she had to say have any importance? Any bearing upon the question at hand? Did she come to prove that he was not the brother of a member of the English aristocracy? Did she come to prove that he did not possess an income of \$250,000 a year? Ah, if that had been her message she knew she would have been well received and heeded.

Had it any importance, any consequence? Ah, yes; surely what she had to tell was of more than ordinary importance. It was more than a tale of the so-called ordinary social peccadillos. What Dr. Brent had before suspected was now but too plain. This greatest catch in New York had no right to enter upon the duties of a husband and a father.

If she were to come to the mother with a tale of approaching disease, of some illness, subtle but sure, that was going to attack her daughter, would not the mother listen?





VII.

MRS. BAYLEY was at home and seemed surprised to see Helen, with well-bred surprise — just a slight elevation of her eyebrows and a polite expression about being so honored by the visit of such a very much engaged woman. But Helen was too earnest to remain long chatting about social nothings, and Mrs. Bayley seemed to catch something of her earnestness and began to look somewhat nervous. Helen asked to be taken into the private boudoir, where they would be free from interruption. They had a long talk.

"I am surprised at you," finally broke in Mrs. Bayley, "I thought you were more a woman of the world, doctor, than to ask me to do such a preposterous thing as to break off the match at this late day. Why, what news have you told me? Now, my dear doctor, you don't really think that I have thought a handsome young fellow with such an enormous fortune could very well have lived the life of a saint? If I listened to you I might as well make up my mind, once for all, to have my daughters remain old maids to the end of their days."

Helen spoke eloquently for a few moments.

"But, my dear doctor," interrupted Mrs. Bayley. "Who knows the girl isn't lying? Shall I ruin my daughter's happiness, her future——"

"Ah, there we have it," thought Helen.

"For the sake of a few idle words spoken by a disappointed

and wretched girl? How do we know that she really came from a respectable family in the country? How do we know anything about it?"

"No, my dear woman," thought Helen. "You will be careful to know as little as possible about it."

"You say, yourself, the girl is hardly accountable for what she says. You admit to me that she is at this moment delirious with high fever. How, then, can you expect me to ruin my poor child's career, to make a public scandal which might kill her, all for this silly, irresponsible girl?"

"Very well, call her silly and irresponsible. Who has made her so? You are afraid to kill your child by breaking off this match, by the publicity of the scandal. If that is what you are really afraid of I shall tell you what you force me to say, which I am sorry is necessary for me to say. You are finding a very much

surer way to kill your daughter than by breaking off this match."

Mrs. Bayley looked startled, "Why, what do you mean?"

Helen flushed deeply. Then she spoke for some minutes, so low that Mrs. Bayley could scarcely catch her words. This time the shot did not go astray. Mrs. Bayley's fat face paled. For a few moments there was dead silence, and Helen's heart beat with hope. Finally Mrs. Bayley rose and, in a broken voice, she incoherently muttered something; Helen could just make out the words:

"Doctors sometimes mistaken—think they know everything—change of habits—marriage—my poor girl—new life—reformation," etc.

By this time Helen realized that her effort had been indeed futile. She left the house, wise in the knowledge of how far a mother's ambition will permit her to go.

The wedding took place. It

was the grandest, the most magnificent affair of the season. The papers gave more space to it than if it had been the founding of a new college or the death of a great genius. It was solemnized in church, the bishop himself officiating. The flowers were superb, the music heavenly, the wedding jewels queenly. Helen was forced to hear from all her patients how beautiful it had been, what magnificent presents had been sent, what a great success it was, how the caterer had made a reputation for himself at the breakfast, and how pretty and happy the bride had looked. Well, *if ever* a girl had everything to be happy for, it was Rose.





VIII.

THE honeymoon was a delightful one. Rose had a trip to Europe. She had her visit to Lady Milminme—a visit which was all a dream of delight ; and she had been presented at one of the Queen's drawing rooms, and Her Majesty had smiled with particular affability, as she recognized her own gift sparkling upon the young bride's shoulder. There had been the excitement of designing the great presentation costume which all had concurred in pronouncing a striking success ; there had been the satisfaction of reading about herself, her social triumphs, her

latest gowns, the entertainments given in her honor, etc., in the society columns of the papers forwarded her from home.

Then there was the season at Lady Milminme's country seat, Grey Oaks, the fascinating, old-fashioned, ancestral home of the Milminme family for generations past. It was all like the pages from some old novel. Rose could have continued her European stay forever, it seemed to her, but she found she had to return to America sooner than she had anticipated. She naturally wished to be with her mother.

Then came a dreary time of wretchedness, when she hung her head and did not much care whether life went on or not. It was a dull succession of days and days of discomfort and misery. Besides, she hated Dr. Manning, but beg as she would, her mother was unmoved and Dr. Brent was not sent for. One day there came a great stillness into the great

house. No one spoke above a whisper; the servants went about their duties, to and fro, on tiptoe. But there was lacking the sly smile peeping out amidst all the anxiety, there was lacking the half-hidden, half-hushed joy, there were absent the tender little sounds from the sickroom, the helpless little wailings—all that never came. It was soon whispered abroad that Rose's child had never lived, that it was a half-formed little creature and was buried quickly.

Rose grew very ill, the doctor shook his head, there were consultations after consultations. Still Rose begged for Helen, and at last her mother gave way and she was sent for. Dr. Manning was only too glad to hand over his patient to Dr. Brent's care. He knew he was being relieved from having a death on his hands. He had small hopes; Helen had none. She watched day and night, but her devotion

was of no avail. It was too late before she was sent for; Rose's condition had been past help.

When Helen stood over Rose's body she felt like a murderer. How much more cause had the mother to feel so. Helen felt small pity for the now completely broken woman, who hysterically reiterated that she had killed her only child, her only child. Helen had tried soothing, and now she endeavored to quiet the woman with sterner methods.

"Madam, tears and wailing will not bring back your daughter, nor have you any right to speak as if she were your only child. You still have another daughter and your duty is to live for her."

Mrs. Bayley continued to sob bitterly, "Oh, yes; I have a daughter, but she can't be mine. Sometimes I wonder where she came from, she's so different from poor Rose. She never loved me; she isn't like my own flesh and blood. I can't bear to think she

has been spared, while my poor Rose has been taken away. I could hate Lotus for living."

It was too late, there stood Lotus in the doorway, grasping the portiere; she looked the picture of desolation.

It was after that, Lotus had taken up her home with Helen.





IX.

MRS. KEITH-BREW'S parlors were crowded. Cards had been sent out for a tea and all her friends turned out in force—not to see her, but to see her friends and to take note of all the beautiful things their hostess had brought home on her latest return from abroad. The rooms were brilliantly lighted and the busy buzz of voices would have been simply maddening to anyone inexperienced enough to stop in one's conversation to listen to the confusion of sounds. The only safe-guard against distraction at such a place is to plunge into conversation and forget what

goes on about you. One must bend one's entire energies to the noble task of listening to the voice of the nearest neighbor.

Mrs. Keith-Brew and her two daughters stand valiantly at the door and have been standing on that identical spot for the past two hours. This is seeing one's dear friends in New York. They will stand there smiling and bowing for one hour more and then they will be released. Mrs. Keith-Brew is a fine looking woman of something over forty. Her daughters have very little to say for themselves; she has a good deal to say, and makes up for their silence. She is particularly fond of telling all her friends how miserable she was before she went abroad and how wonderfully she had been cured by Dr. Brent. She is talking on her favorite subject now, to a slender, beautiful woman with soft auburn hair and sparkling black eyes, who is

noticeably the most elegantly dressed woman in the room.

"I assure you, my dear," she is saying. "There is positively no one like her. You know they do say Dr. Manning is wild with jealousy. She takes half his practice away. And then, you know, there's that hospital, the one founded by that awful Mrs. Root."

"With the fearful dyed hair, and the dowdy camel's-hair shawl?"

"The very same—Oh, how do you do, Mr. Watts, I am so glad to see you. My daughters, Mr. Watts—What, Miss Sprague, not going to take any tea? Such a very cold day—And as I was saying, Dr. Manning was furious when I left him—How good of you to have come, dear Mrs. Morse—And Dr. Brent did me worlds of good, as you see."

"Just fancy, a woman physician; my husband is so prejudiced against them."

"Why, you don't tell me! But then no one could dislike Dr. Brent. Why this is too sweet of you, doctor, in the midst of all your work; I was just singing your praises and I have made this lady quite wild to meet you. Dr. Brent, let me introduce you to Mrs. Skidmore, Mrs. Harold Skidmore—Ah, so Mr. Pratt, you did come, after all your abuse of teas?"

"Mrs. Skidmore."

"Dr. Brent."

"You fool," shrieks a tall woman into Mrs. Keith-Brew's ear. "Didn't you know——" the rest is lost; Mrs. Keith-Brew turns with an exclamation of dismay. Dr. Brent smiles, perfectly self-possessed.

"I wonder if he has told her," quickly went through her mind.

"Indeed, doctor, you have a very doughty champion in our hostess and I am so very glad to meet you. Of course I have heard any amount about you. I have had quite a curiosity. Mr.

Skidmore, you know, or perhaps you don't know, is most obstinately set against women becoming physicians. It's too absurd; he is really quite broad-minded in many things, but then that is one of his hobbies, I suppose, so I must put up with it."

"He has not told her," concluded Dr. Brent.

"Why, how are you, Mrs. Skidmore," exclaims a pert little lady, interrupting and talking very fast. "And where is Mr. Skidmore, isn't he going to honor us to-day, or does he look down upon us little mortals who have time to attend teas? It would be such a pleasure now for me to see my name to-morrow right after that of the Honorable Harold Skidmore."

"You will have to be contented with his wife," Mrs. Skidmore answered.

"Oh, no," exclaimed someone. "He'll be here anyway, according to to-morrow's papers."

Helen was about to slip off, but she was seized.

"Now, Dr. Brent," exclaimed the same indefatigable talker. "This is too bad! Mrs. Skidmore was just saying we should not have the honor of having Mr. Skidmore and now you want to desert us. We must really keep one celebrity, you know. You don't appreciate, Mrs. Skidmore, what a compliment the doctor is paying us in coming at all. She rarely if ever attends such frivolous things as teas."

"But the mandates of Mrs. Keith-Brew are not to be defied."

"No, indeed; but tell us what horrible operation have you had on hand this afternoon, and to what terrible scene of misery are you now wending your footsteps. I am sure it will be something horrible as a sort of penance for having been frivolous here."

Here a young fellow came up to Mrs. Skidmore, and Helen could not but listen with interest.

"Oh, come now, Mrs. Skidmore, it's too bad of your husband to treat us so. He makes a young, struggling lawyer like myself feel ashamed of being here. I feel as if I, too, ought to have a hundred and forty cases weighing on my conscience, and a dozen trips to Albany and Washington. Its too bad of him, really."

Mrs. Skidmore smiled. She seemed pleased at the unusual notice that was taken of her husband's absence.

"Yes," she assented, "Mr. Skidmore has little time for any pleasures and I must serve as a substitute, although a very poor one, I know. He never goes out socially in the afternoons, and even in the evenings half the time I am all dressed, waiting for him, when a telegram comes to me saying, 'I am unavoidably detained,' or 'Called suddenly to Washington, back in three days.' It's a horrid profession."

"That is the punishment of

being the wife of Harold Skidmore."

Helen turned away and sought to find her hostess's nieces, who were presiding over the tea table. She wanted to get out of the crowd. The silly nothings of conversation, the whole atmosphere of hollowness, of glitter, of insincerity, she longed to escape from as soon as possible. She was conscious that her hopes, her aims, her theory of life were so irrevocably different from those of the women about her. She did not often attend teas, and when she was obliged to do so, she returned to her home tired and out of sorts. She always refreshed herself with the biography of some great woman. She would take down some volume from her shelf and enjoy a peaceful reading of the career of Dorothea Dix, or Mary Somerville, or Margaret Fuller ; of some woman that had nobly lived up to some definite purpose, some great life work. She required these moments to

bring back her damaged faith in womanhood. It was like breathing the fresh air of the fields after the heavy atmosphere of the crowded parlor.

She struggled through the crowd. At one time she found herself in the midst of a chattering group of ladies. The topic of conversation was so interesting to her, that she was forced, almost in spite of herself, to stand still and listen with a sort of fascination, painful as it was. One lady was saying:

"Well, now, that's very well, Mrs. Parker, but my husband is a minister and you can have no idea what that means."

Several ladies murmured their sympathy.

"To begin with, I never dare go near him, and the children, good gracious, they mustn't speak above a whisper, while he is preparing a sermon, and Sunday instead of being a day of rest is his hardest day. He never has one blessed

moment to himself, not one. And then all the week it's one thing after another. He doesn't have any time to know his own children, he's so constantly having to attend to other people's. Then there's his Bible class and the free school and the Society for the Prevention of Vice, and the Society for the Protection of Orphans. I do wish that someone would start a society for the Protection of Lone Minister's Wives."

There was a general laugh at this sally. Another broke in.

"But, my dear woman, confess, at least, that your husband has the best of it in the summer. There you go away together for a glorious summer jaunt, but as for my poor husband, he never gets off. We generally remain in town for some horribly late and unmethodical creature, and come flying back before half our vacation is over for some equally vexatious, over-impatient one."

"It's too bad, it is too bad,"

said someone. "They ought to arrange more considerately."

"It's perfectly frightful," she went on. "And last summer the doctor went to Europe with a patient. It sounds lovely, doesn't it? But I assure you, he came home thoroughly worn out and exhausted with his constant attendance, and I had a doleful enough summer in a horrid little hole all alone with the children."

"Well, maybe we do have it better in the summer," remarked the minister's wife. "But it makes up for it during the rest of the year, and mind you, a minister's wife does not dare look cross or out of temper, and mustn't say naughty things."

"Well, you get your meals straight, anyway," rejoined the other. "If it weren't for the children, I suppose we'd never sit down to a meal. He's never home on time, and as for keeping cooks—well, you know what that is, when one's meals are all topsy-

turvy." Helen was about to pass on with a peculiar smile, when someone noticed her and called out :

"Ah, Dr. Brent, come here. We wives are holding an indignation meeting."

"Not that we blame our poor husbands in the least," hastened to add the two complainants deprecatingly.

"It's good you're not married," continued the person that had called to Dr. Brent. "We have just been hearing what frightful better-halves you doctors make." Helen answered in some heat (perhaps it did seem a little unwarranted, but then, how were they expected to understand?):

"Excuse me, Mrs. Smith, but it is only the men physicians that can afford to neglect their homes. There would be few women physicians if they married, and their better halves had to bear the burdens you are talking about. You see I was not fortunate enough to

find any man that was sufficiently self-sacrificing to take irregular meals, and give up vacations for me, so I am left a forlorn old maid," and with a light laugh she passed on.

There was a rather startled pause.

"How changed she is; isn't it too bad how all these strong-minded women do get sour," someone said.

"Well, they do say, she had quite a romantic love story, you know," added another.





X.

IT was a great blessing to Helen to have Lotus, the young, enthusiastic girl in her home. It took a great loneliness away from Helen's heart and it forced her to hide many a discouragement and fit of depression. She could not bear to dim her young friend's bright horizon. But the night when Helen returned from Mrs. Keith-Brew's reception, the two began a discussion which drew Helen out in a way that she never intended. She had entered the study and found Lotus seated on a low stool by the fire. She had been reading Margaret Fuller's "Wom-

no other outlook. I am going to give men a lesson right off. Helen, let me go to market for the future."

Helen laughed, "You must not make the mistake which many women make and cry out blindly against men. You must not lay all the blame upon them; my experience is, that women fail to understand us much more than men do."

"Oh, please don't tell me that."

"I am sorry, dear, but you will find it out for yourself, and have you not just told me not to treat you like a child? Of course it is easily accounted for. Women have lived so long in such a narrow sphere that their judgment is warped. They have become conservative through seeing only one phase of life; only one kind of existence going on. Men, on the contrary, through rubbing up against many men and women, through seeing so many phases of life, so many types of people, often

acquire a breadth, even the most ordinary, uneducated men, which is not possessed by any but an exceptionally broad-minded woman."

"Yes; that is so."

"Then a happy woman seldom thinks any woman needs any different sphere than the one she herself so gracefully fills. You know what Hawthorne says, 'Women seldom disquiet themselves about the rights or wrongs of their sex, unless their own individual affections happen to lie in idleness or to be ill at ease.' Now this is not perfectly true, there are many women who are perfectly happy and have blessed lots that nevertheless do go forth and work for their sex. Still it is largely true that a happy wife who knows nothing out of her own narrow circle—and only a woman that has stood out in the world and worked can know how narrow that wife's sphere is—will toss her head and say, 'I want nothing

better : motherhood is the crowning glory of woman's lot.' How can they know of the hundreds that can never wear that crown of glory ; of the hundreds that wear it as a crown of—— Oh, how can I talk to you, child, of these things ? ”

The girl had crept over to Helen and lay at her feet, holding her hands.

“ Tell me, Helen, do not stop. I am not so young. I am anxious to learn, to know. Teach me to do right ; teach me to do something for women to make them happy.”

“ You will need another teacher. Most women work for the happiness of others when they set about their philanthropic work. You may be surprised when I tell you that my chief aim in working is to make all women find themselves.”

“ Find themselves ? ”

“ Yes ; it may be a great deal to make them happy, but remember

the words of Christ : ' For what shall a man be profited if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul ? ' Indeed, what is the good of material happiness, or where is the grace of marriage, no matter what comes with it, if the real soul be forfeited ? The time came for me long ago, when I had to choose between losing or finding myself. Not that I really did find myself, but neither did I entirely lose myself. It is all wrong that so few women exist that have truly, in every sense of the word, found themselves ; found their complete, rounded selves. What we must work for is the recognition of the true dignity of the individual. The rights of the individual genius must be recognized everywhere in man or woman, but they are not. You will answer incredulously, ' What, do we not now recognize genius, when we find it in either sex ; have we not praised without stint George Eliot, for example ; have we not placed her quite by

the side of our great Thackeray?' As novelists, perhaps, but as individuals, surely not. Suppose Thackeray were to neglect his family sometimes and refuse to take his place in the bosom of his home circle; if he preferred to finish his 'Newcomes' or 'Pendennis,' who would have said one word in protest? And why is it that we are so proud that George Eliot knew how to make pies and put up jam? Why is it that some third-rate professor in some far-away Western 'university' will be the grand mogul of his family, must not be disturbed in his calculations, baby must stop crying, Mary Ann must cease rattling the dishes, his dinner must be kept nice and warm? But can a Mrs. Somerville dare these things? Do we not rather point with pride to the fact that she was the most exquisite of darners, made all her own dresses, and was ever ready to hide her manuscript under the table cover and smilingly receive

the visits of the neighbors? Answer me, is this not the real tragedy of woman's lot to-day? One home neglected by a woman and the whole world is up in arms. A thousand homes neglected by the lord and master, and the world smiles and shrugs its shoulders. 'Que faire?' it says."

"But I suppose the man must be more leniently judged since it is he that must earn the bread and butter."

"Ah, yes; to be sure. The comfort and beauty of the home are to center about that one great fact. I scorn that view—but I won't even enter into that now. Will you tell me why the man has always to be the only bread earner? You will be shocked. 'What! can the woman earn her living and leave the baby?' But there are many ways of earning one's bread and butter. It often would not take her away from the baby more than cooking in the kitchen, and the additional money might

enable her to keep a respectable nurse. How many homes have I seen where the wife is degraded into a second servant because the husband is too thin-skinned to permit her to earn any money. The world would think she is mistreated; that he does not earn enough for two, and ought not to have married. You see many a disagreeable task can be hidden at home in the nursery and in the kitchen, but why should not a woman have at least her choice? There are teaching and writing. Many things can be done that do not starve the mind and soul as does housework. How many men are broad-minded enough to permit their wives to have a kindergarten or a little school in their parlors; how many would not insist that they be household drudges? It is simply conventionality. Somehow we don't look shocked when a fairly well-to-do man tells us with pride that his wife makes all the desserts and all

the dresses for the children. Why then, under Heaven, should there be such a difference about confessing that one's wife teaches children or describes the fashions or illustrates books for a living?

"Many a broken-down woman comes to me for treatment, who is simply wearing her life away, draining her entire nerve force on mere household drudgery. The husbands of those women would be overcome with self-contempt if it were necessary for their wives to go out and earn a living—to *earn a living*, at least there would be some *living*, to it, not the slow, miserable death-in-life that I see go on about me."

Lotus was left with many thoughts that night, but there was a reigning thought, a sweet consciousness that kept the tender smile twinkling at the corners of her lips.

Lotus smiled sweetly in her dreams; she was very young, and to her many of the trials of wom-

an's lot were beyond the power of imagination. She was sure she loved wisely; the man of her dreams was the man with whom she had worked almost daily for two years. She knew him, and he knew her. There had never passed words of love between them, but Lotus felt a sweet security in his quiet affection for her. Did he not always bring her his letters from home, read to her messages from his mother, tell her of his home in dear old Frankfort? Was it not to her that he always brought tickets for the latest concert, or some particularly interesting lecture? Did he not always think of her, was he not always constant in his attentions?

She had heard that women did make mistakes and give their hearts to men that were unsympathetic, but surely their married life would be ideal. They had the same tastes, the same hopes. Professor Schurer was a man that would be proud of his wife's suc-

cess and would watch her work with real deep interest, and she, on her part, would be equally interested in his. It would a marriage of soul, of mind, and heart. No wonder Lotus was happy.





XI.

IT was some time after this that Helen began to notice a great change in Lotus. Day by day she grew thin and pale, and her usual energy and child-like enthusiasm were fast disappearing. Helen well knew the cause of Lotus's unhappiness. She had watched Professor Schurer closely and long ago she had become convinced that his friendship for Lotus would never grow into a warmer sentiment. Helen's judgment was keen; she knew men, and further she knew German men, and knew their ideas of marital felicity. A true German would never imagine that a stu-

dent such as Lotus, a woman who devoted herself to chemical research, whose aim was to teach that beloved science, could possess the requisite qualities of a wife. Helen had much behind her in the past that taught her to read men's hearts. Women's hearts, read rightly, often serve to interpret the actions of the opposite sex.

Helen struggled alone with her anxiety. It was a heavy burden upon Helen, for she loved Lotus with a passionate love; all her hopes, all her own womanly longings had been turned into the channel of Lotus's future. In her unhappiness she lived again her own bitter trial. One day, in conversation with her friend Kate Dunning, the secret came out and Helen opened her heart to the one woman whose completely happy life she envied.

The Dunnings were a marvelous couple, who actually lived as others always said they were

going to live some day. They were not well-to-do people, and so, instead of cramping themselves in some Harlem flat, or boarding in two rooms in some fashionable neighborhood, they had the courage and faith in themselves to rent a small home with a big piazza and some grounds in Fort Washington.

The Dunnings did not share the prevailing theories of the division of duties in the family. Mr. Dunning conducted his business down town, and Mrs. Dunning conducted hers up town. To Kate Dunning the care of the house was not the crowning glory of wifehood. Neither did she believe that man must necessarily make the money, and woman absorb herself merely in spending it. A life without some earnest occupation would have been dreary and empty to her. And so her little Kindergarten, which she had organized some years before, was not given up, but merely

moved to the "country," as most people insisted in calling Fort Washington, in total disregard of the map of the metropolis.

Kate's Kindergarten had been a great success, and now, eight years after her marriage, its most hopeful pupil was her own, bright, winning boy. Yes, unheard-of as it may seem, Kate Dunning was a mother and a *Kindergärtnerin*, and her friends can vouch for it that her home was always comfortable and that the internal machinery (or infernal machinery, as some have cause enough to say) worked smoothly and noiselessly.

I think—and Helen thought—John Dunning was a hero. At first, in the early days of his marriage, many poked fun at him for letting his wife earn her living instead of his doing it for her. It was noticeable, however, that none ever teased twice. Not that he was ill-tempered, but convincing. Old Mrs. Dunning had been greatly shocked—"What, her son

not able to support his wife decently?"—John had had a quiet talk with his mother which silenced her, even if it failed to win her. It at least convinced her that there no interference would be permitted.

"My dear mother," he had said, "it simply means that I prefer to engage my wife as a *Kindergärtnerin*, while others prefer theirs to be cooks or seamstresses."

Mrs. Dunning thought her John was slightly demented, but he continued, "Why should I insist upon Kate's being cooped up in a room, washing dishes, cutting out dresses, darning socks, rolling piecrust, or cleaning bric-a-brac, when she can earn enough at her Kindergarten to pay for a good cook and a competent chambermaid and seamstress? You know if I forced her to give up her Kindergarten, it would force her to give up many of the pleasantest features about our home. From a satisfied, active, sympathetic com-

panion as she has always been, bless her ! she would soon degenerate into one of those nervous, discontented, narrow-minded, and unsympathetic wives that men often force their better halves into becoming. I declare it's more than I can understand, how men can willfully cramp the souls of their life companions into the mental horizon of a maid of all work."

Again I say John Dunning was a hero, and many were the quiet battles fought. What sympathy he met with when it leaked out that his wife never held a needle in her hand from January till June. But John smiled and said ;

" I am not ashamed to say, our Maria darns my socks better than her mistress could, but," he added, with his face aglow, " there are many things which Kate can do that Maria is not quite so handy at."

People watched John, in the sly hope of noting a neglected tear, a missing button, or a frayed

elbow, but John was too clever for them. He knew a frayed elbow on him meant an endless amount of gossip over his wife, and so rigorously watched himself, and unmanlike actually brought his own clothes himself to be repaired. He even critically eyed his own cravats, and endeavored not to forget to brush his hat. Kate thought his care of his own appearance was one of the sweetest tributes he paid her; she knew what it meant, and what a bore it must be to him.

And when the baby came! No one dreamed of the quiet happiness that was Kate's. How could the world imagine that a woman that didn't make a bit of the outfit herself, that didn't even approve of feather-stitching on flannel skirts, could possibly take any pride in her baby! And Kate stolidly refused to acknowledge that machine-made clothes were necessarily any less comfortable and wholesome than

clothes that had taken hours and hours of wearisome stitching and broken backs and weak eyes "because baby's things must all be hand-made." Of course people generally conceded that Kate Dunning's child would look like a little orphan, and that was the end of it. Strange to say, I think, Baby Dunning inherited some of his father's resolution and pride, for he seemed to understand that it was incumbent upon him to look clean and neat whenever mamma's friends aimed their critical eyes upon him. They never found his bibs soiled nor his frock torn, nor his toes coming through his socks; in fact none of their dismal prophecies came true. And how can we account for it that a healthy, lively boy could always seem to be clean and neat unless he was actuated by the brave determination in his little breast not to give satisfaction to the army of critics which was solemnly arrayed against his own dear mamma?



XII.

HELEN promised herself a rare treat, and had visited her friends, the Dunnings, one Sunday at their charming home overlooking the Hudson. It was late October, there had been some very sudden changes of temperature, and never before did the shores bear such a glorious wealth of color. Glancing out of the library window, and seeing the bright blue water below with a white yacht or two on it, the wall of deep red and yellow foliage beyond, and the soft clear sky above, Helen sighed heavily.

“Oh, what perfect peace and quiet this is; what a change, what

a divine sense of rest comes over one here after the cobblestones of New York. Do you know, when I get here a shame comes over me, a very shame for the crazy, unnatural life I lead. There, just look out at that picture; see that long line of majestic, hospitable elms, see that winding soft brown road, and just look at that single birch gleaming so pure and white. And do you know, I have the strangest fancy, I actually prefer the winter landscape to the spring. To most people there is a sadness about bare trees, but to me there is nothing more exquisitely beautiful than the delicate etchings of those fine, graceful, slender limbs against the sky."

"Yes, it is a beautiful picture," said Kate, with her arms about Helen's waist. "I confess I am very happy here. And yet," she said suddenly, with a light laugh, "only yesterday, one of your city folks condoled with me, say-

ing 'It must be so trying out there in the wilderness; whatever do you find to do with yourself any way?'"

Helen smiled: "And I am willing to guess you answered mildly and sweetly; I should have been cross and impolite—I know I should. That sort of patronizing of one's dearest hopes and aims, which is encountered in society, goads me fearfully."

At that moment Kate's husband entered the room with his bright curly-haired boy. They were dressed for a tramp. Kate kissed them good-by, and then turned to Helen:

"My dear," she said, "when one has all this, how can one mind such trifles?"

There were tears in Helen's eyes, "O Kate," she exclaimed, "and I am growing more and more bitter every day. It seems to me as if the world always turns its wrong side to me."

"Now, Helen," replied her

friend gently, "this won't do, you are overtired. Come up here with Lotus, and have a few days' rest. I've noticed Lotus is looking a little pale lately. We'll have to give her some country air, too."

Helen sank into a chair, "Poor Lotus," she said. "And have you noticed it?"

"Why, Helen, what is the matter? Is she ill?"

Helen pressed Kate's hand, "Perhaps I ought to tell you. It is killing me, keeping it all to myself and brooding over it."

"Helen, you frighten me. I thought Lotus was so happy, and I thought you were so contented that she cared for Professor Schurer. Now, what has taken place, doesn't she care for him?"

"Anyone could see that. O Kate, that is not the trouble."

"But he's been so attentive, and he took her to that entire Fiske course, and he never goes to a concert that he doesn't ask her to

go with him, and their work in the laboratory brings them together so sweetly. I think it's the most perfect match I've ever seen."

Helen laid her hand on Kate's shoulder. "If it weren't for you and your blessed John, my faith in double blessedness would be gone."

"Why, how can you—there, stop your work; you are growing desperately morbid, take a vacation."

"I am growing cynical, but how can one help it? Here I've watched Professor Schurer and Lotus and have longed to see them married, watching with fond and foolish eyes how suited they were to one another. Kate, if you select a man and a woman who seem to be made for each other, be sure that one or the other—generally the man—will love some third person. It doesn't seem to be the law of love to *suit one another*. How can one understand it? I am perfectly

positive that Professor Schurer admires Lotus greatly, I think he esteems her above any other woman, he likes her grit, thinks she is going to make her mark. He loves her sweet disposition, he basks in her genial ways, he looks anxious when she is overworked, and——”

“And?”

“And he’s no more in love with her than he is with you or me.”

“Oh, you don’t tell me!”

“There I see him, day by day, growing deeper and deeper in love with that little numskull of a Brown girl.”

“What? Maria Brown’s daughter? Just because he boards there!”

“Don’t ask me; I’m too much exasperated. Can you tell me what there is in that girl?”

“Blue eyes, and beautiful auburn hair.”

“Exactly. Now, that’s what makes me lose faith in man and in the future.”

"But, Helen, this is an old story, that men will marry for passion, and not true esteem and affection."

"True; an old story. But it was not so bad fifty years ago. A woman did not look for anything else. She was more ready to marry the man that was attracted to her, and did not demand so much."

"That's true."

"Now women have professions, interests, and opinions of their own. They look for sympathy; they must have it. No longer can they absorb themselves entirely in being household utilities and domestic animals. But, tell me, how are they going to get sympathy, how are they going to get husbands that will respect their individuality, when the only men that are capable of understanding, of appreciating such women—men like Johann Schurer—go off and marry their Molly Browns? What will be the end of it all?"

"But, Helen," mildly interposed Kate, "my dear girl, you are talking of men only. . Do not women as well lose their hearts to utterly unworthy men?"

Helen drew a deep breath, and looked away for a moment. "I say no; women are not so apt to stoop to inferior men; or, if one is in love with an unsympathetic man, she often controls her feelings. But that is not the question—pardon me, it is not. The question is: Why are the women that do commit such a mistake always unhappy, and why are the men never so? You cannot tell me that a woman can be happy who does not find sympathy and congeniality in her home, whose higher instincts and noblest aims are kept secreted from her husband. But the magnificent men that are happy with their Molly Browns are legion. There are any number of men that, as the husbands of their Mollies, apparently do not find anything is

lacking. It is so easy for them to go elsewhere for their intellectual stimulus."

"Why, Helen, how you go on!"

"Yes, for I am wound up now, and I shall not stop yet. It's in me; I've been smothering it for so long."

"Go on, my dear; you'll feel better when it's out of you."

"It's no joking matter. Here is one of the greatest problems for the future to solve. How can the woman of the future be happily married? or is she to renounce it forever? Is the highest type of woman destined never to be handed down to the succeeding generation? Is the noblest work of woman to be left in the hands of the lowest of her sex? I have seen an editorial in a prominent woman's journal lately, which seemed to think the problem would be solved if professional women would not marry. It seemed to think that a certain number of women as well as a certain num-

ber of men never marry. Let those women, it said, that care to absorb themselves and lose their identity marry if they wish ; but let this idea that all women should marry, that wifehood and motherhood are the crowning glories of a woman's lot, die a natural death. I have noticed a hostile attitude toward marriage among a great many of our most intellectual women, and I am very sorry to see it. I think it is very unfortunate. The problem of marriage will never be solved by *Punch's* immortal 'Don't.' Can any true woman acknowledge that to be the solution of it? Is it wise for women simply to give up the struggle, and turn their backs on marriage, saying, 'Such is not for us?' Either one of two things must come to pass. It seems to me, either men must become dissatisfied with physical marriages, and must look for intellectual and spiritual marriage as well ; or, if women do marry their inferiors, they will

have to assume the same liberty that the married man possesses to-day."

"Why, what can you mean? Not the same moral standards, I hope."

"Oh, no; but if women are doomed to uncongenial wedded life then they must learn not to look for too much from it—they must learn, like the men, to take love—marriage—parenthood *en passant*, not to make it the business of life."

"Surely you would not approve of that!"

"Surely not! The only real way to the ideal marriage is the demand on the part of men for more than physical satisfaction. I refer to the demand for housekeepers and cooks when I say this, quite as much as another kind of physical satisfaction—it all answers physical needs. Marriage becomes purified and ennobled just so far as the higher claims of soul and mind enter into it. Thus

far marriage has been governed by the spirit of man; little by little the finer, more delicate claims of woman are being respected. A great work on the History of Human Marriage closes with the inspiring words: 'The History of Human Marriage is the history of a relation in which women have been gradually triumphing over the passions, the prejudices, and the selfish interests of men.' But there is a great deal still to be accomplished. It is a vexed problem and will be for some time to come."





XIII.

LOUISE SKIDMORE sat down and fairly cried with vexation. This was the second affair that week she had been obliged to forego, because at the last moment her husband had been unable to accompany her.

"Now, my darling, you know it isn't my fault, you know I would much rather go with you than have to take that long, tiresome trip to Washington. I am very sorry, but can't you send for your brother?"

"You know Fred is at Tuxedo."

"Can't you send for the Manns? They'll take you."

"No; Cecily is going to dine first with the Marshes, and then they were to go together."

Harold paced up and down impatiently. The coupé stood at the door, his satchels were in the hall, it was time to leave. It was unfortunate to have a wife that minds your leaving town suddenly. Was it possible for him to put off an important piece of business at the White House in order to escort his wife to a ball?

"My dear little woman, now do cheer up. You know you are proud that your husband is wanted all over at the same moment, you have told me so yourself. Do take courage, and be a brave little woman. If you are nervous send for someone to stay with you, I'll be back in a day or two, probably by to-morrow evening."

"Good-by, I'm all right. Hurry up now, or you'll miss the train." But a sudden glance at the lovely new costume lying on the bed brought the tears back, and Harold left the house sorry for his wife indeed, but feeling rather sore that she should take it so to

heart, and act as if he were really neglecting her, when he was obliged to go off on business. It wasn't his fault; did he go for fun? Didn't he have the hardest part of of it? At least she had a comfortable bed to sleep in, while he would be tossing to and fro on his berth, rattling along to Washington. It seemed to him as if she ought to have something more substantial to amuse her than a ball or a theater party. He smiled to himself as he thought how he would enjoy one quiet evening to himself. How he would relish sitting night after night in a snug library surrounded with all his favorites. Oh, that would be happiness! And Louise, who had all the time she wanted, he doubted if it ever occurred to her to sit there for a moment. If she ever did any reading, it was a light novel, generally French, and she preferred to stretch herself cozily upon her boudoir lounge and munch *bonbons* while she read.

Well, he had chosen this beautiful, indolent, spoilt woman for his wife. He admired her; he loved her passionately. She answered perfectly to certain moods of his; she was always dressed in perfect taste, she presided over their home with a delightful charm; when he was out with her he felt proud of her, she was so beautiful, so graceful, so bewitching. He was not jealous of all the attention that was showered upon her and was glad to find she was amused by it. He often felt that he could not offer her sufficient amusement himself and he was glad that others could offer it. He loved his wife a great deal, but he kept only one side of his life for her. She was his Priestess of the Beautiful; his Goddess of Ease and Luxury; he never thought of asking her to share his worries, and he never felt the necessity for doing so. Why cause a line to destroy the beauty of that smooth, white brow? And he im-

agined that he preferred it so. Thus he could come home and forget all his cares; his home was a place whence disagreeable thoughts were to be rigorously banished.

There was no doubt but that sometimes, rarely, Harold did turn to the past with just the ghost of a pang. He felt that a marriage with Helen would have been more completely rounded; that there would have been less regret on his part, for instance, when obliged to leave his wife for a business trip. He could not help but smile as he thought of Helen being ennuied by having to remain alone. He pictured her seated in the library enjoying some book that they would be sure to talk over together the next day, but then there was the disagreeable and equally lifelike picture of Helen being left at home and putting on her bonnet to attend some meeting or some consultation, or to perform some dreadful operation, and coming

home to him smelling of ether and iodoform and such abominations. And the time might have come when Harold had no engagements, when he had come home free for once and happy in the expectation of a quiet evening spent together, like as not, just that evening Helen would have some important work to do, work that could not be put off. How uncomfortable to have a wife whose duties would interfere with the comfort, with the social life of a home. Why, what man would bear it? To the woman the home should come above all things. It was obviously her duty to be the center of the home life.

Still sometimes, only sometimes, Harold could not refrain from wishing that women like Helen had something of the Louise about them, or that the Louises had more of the Helen in them. The line between such women was too sharply drawn for comfort. Why were women either dolls or steam engines?



XIV.



R. BRENT'S office hours were just over. With a sigh of relief she leaned back in her comfortable chair, with her feet crossed on the hearth. She was glad that the day's work was done. She had been fretted more than usual to-day. One particular incident had annoyed and worried her, even more than she had liked to admit to herself. One of her patients had remarked:

"I see Mr. Skidmore has accepted the Presidency of the Municipal Health League."

This was no surprise to Helen, since she had been Chairman of the Nominating Committee.

Harold and she often met at public meetings, for each played an important part in the philanthropic movements of the day.

"There are some more duties for him," added the lady bitingly, "I don't see how his wife stands it. I for one don't blame her one bit, no I don't."

"Blame her," thought Helen. "Now I wonder what on earth she can mean?" But she answered coldly, "I suppose Mrs. Skidmore is as proud of her husband as we all are of him." Her patient laughed lightly.

"Oh, yes; of course, certainly. Very proud of him, but it seems to me that's hardly enough for a wife, is it? You want to know something more of your husband than his picture in the daily papers, don't you?"

"Why, surely, Mrs. Blagden—" protested Helen.

"Oh, come, now don't go off into one of your indignation spells," she exclaimed. "Of

course, he doesn't positively neglect his wife; you don't think a Skidmore would do that! Hasn't she the handsomest rubies this season, and aren't her teas the most uncomfortably crowded in all New York? And hasn't she plenty of gallant cavaliers? At least she is sure of one who is a host in himself."

Then Helen had stopped her and had left the house, but she could not wave those idle words away from her all day. What did it mean? Could it be that Harold could neglect his wife, neglect her so as to make it common talk? It was not like Harold, and yet, she could not help think uncomfortably of how busy he was, and how impossible it must be for him to see very much of her, and was she strong enough to stand alone? Had she any resources of her own against ennui, loneliness? Helen could not help remember Harold's words to her when he left her, saying she

would never be able to reconcile the duties of marriage with her ambitions. Was he making the same mistake? And what *did* that woman mean to insinuate?"

But tired and perplexed as she was, her eyes were bright with expectation, for to-night she was to hear her favorite opera, "Götterdämmerung," which she had not heard since her student days in Germany. A few days before she had confessed to one of her patients that she had never heard "Götterdämmerung" in America, and she was persuaded to accompany her in the family box. There was no escape, although Helen would have greatly preferred sitting alone in some quiet corner of the dress circle where she could listen unobserved.

When Helen entered the box, she was its only occupant, although the overture was just about to begin. The rows of empty boxes frowned at her depressingly. Here and there was a solitary

occupant like herself, someone equally unversed in the manners of good society. The overture began, and Helen wondered how all these people could afford to miss it. What an opera it is. The passionate rhapsody of *Brünnhilde's* parting with *Siegfried* shook Helen's soul. What had *Brünnhilde* not given up? Immortality, Godhead, her wild, free, natural existence, rushing along with the force of the clouds, flying before the winds of the Heavens; all, all this for the love of a man, for the love of a man who would soon forget her love, forget it for a simple maiden, who was but a star next to *Brünnhilde's* glorious sunlight. And how with this Renunciation, this past behind her, could she yet sing so rapturously, so gloriously of love, of true womanhood?

Ah, was there not reason why this music, this apotheosis of passion, should shake Helen from her very soul? The story of

Brünnhilde was the old Saga, old, very old, but is not the same story enacted to-day, only the tale is somewhat changed? *Wotan*—public opinion—says to *Brünnhilde*—the woman that has dared to step out of the usual course of dependence and uselessness—“So thou hast defied me, the God of the world. Thou hast taken thy charger and hast sped on to tracks that have been forbidden thee. Thou hast willfully separated thyself from thy sisters, who obediently follow where I lead. And for this sin thou shalt be cut off from the natural sphere of thy womanhood. For this shall the great and all-powerful *Wotan* teach thee that he shall not be defied. For this shall *Wotan* doom thee to lie throughout the ages as if dead, but verily sleeping, surrounded by mountains of ice and frost. The gleam of the sun upon the glaciers shall cause many to draw nigh attracted, but when they see the mountains upon

mountains of ice that have to be scaled, the icy breath of the frost to be passed through, they will be daunted and a great fear shall be upon them and they shall flee. And behold not until thy hero cometh—not until thy *Siegfried* shall appear, shalt thou be released from thy deep sleep, which is as death. When thy hero cometh, thy *Siegfried*, then shall the mountains of ice and the thick walls of the glaciers melt away and disappear, even as ice melts before the flame.”

This is the modern Saga of *Brünnhilde*, but it is far more tragic than the Saga of yore. The *Siegfried* that shall come dauntless to face the ice and frost will have to be a greater hero than even *Siegfried*, the hero of old. For many a man is led on by the glare of passion, by the flaming breath of love, and who would turn back from them fearing to be scorched? When higher and higher leap the flames about *Brünnhilde's* couch—

higher and higher mount the answering flames in her lover's heart. But the impetuous lover's breast to be chilled by the icy frost, the intrepid voyager to proceed on when his passion congeals within him in the frigid air that sweeps over from the mountains of ice! Oh, a great, a bold, a valiant *Siegfried* does it take to pierce below all this and reach the warm glow, the fierce fire that is steadily burning beneath this ice and frost! A fire that will rise and leap up, up, up, when the surrounding frost melts away and the great heart of flame is laid bare. "Oh, there she is, prompt, of course. My dear Dr. Brent, you must excuse us; let me present my little cousin, Miss Daisy Cuttle, one of our *débütantes*, you know, from Cayuga. We had such a horribly long dinner, I thought we should never get here, but then we've heard the 'Götterdämmerung' so often."

Helen shivered; the upturned

faces of the audience went through her inexperienced soul like a knife. A low murmur of reproach finally silenced the speaker, and Helen vainly endeavored to again concentrate her attention upon the opera. Notwithstanding the fact that her patient was one of the most fashionable leaders in New York, and that the box she was in was the most richly appointed in the opera house, Helen did not feel proud of her surroundings; again and again she regretted that she had been persuaded to accept the invitation. We have seen before that Helen had very wrong notions of many things, and we know her bump of social reverence was either totally missing, or at least very strangely placed, quite in the wrong spot, for she certainly revered things that it was obviously absurd to reverence. Just think of the difficulty of the task before me to awaken any sympathy or interest for a heroine that not only does

not feel herself honored by reposing in the finest satin-cushioned chairs in the opera house, but that if asked would not have been aware that she was with the very best society of the entire audience. A heroine that would have pointed (I am almost afraid to acknowledge it) to the dress circle, and maybe a little higher up, if asked to point out the best society in the place?

In fact, quite a strange little incident took place during the performance of another opera that same season, when she had found herself in the balcony next to a small nervous woman, who evidently wanted to get the very most of her night's treat. This woman, not dreaming that the quietly dressed woman next to her could have anything to do with all those fine people in the boxes, remarked with a sigh that she wished she could know who all the great folks were. Her neighbor leaned over :

"I think I can tell you, madam." The little woman looked pleased, and Helen continued, obeying a sudden impulse, "You wish to know who are all the best people here, do you not? You want me to point out the very best society?" The little woman was delighted.

"Look up there in the gallery, way up there in the corner. Do you see that pale woman who is leaning over very much absorbed during the last act—perhaps you noticed that she carried a very heavy book? That is the score of the opera, and she follows every note of it eagerly. She is a poor music teacher, who supports a widowed mother and a crippled sister. She has saved for many a day to hear this opera, and even then would not have used the money had not her mother with tears in her eyes beseeched her to go." The little woman on her left had never turned her eyes *upward*, and so she admitted.

"Then you see that poor, little sickly, deformed boy with the big head up there on the last row? He is a genius; some day I hope to get our wealthy people interested in him. If he can have a fine education, he will be one of our great musicians." The little woman grew impatient.

"But," she said, "I wanted to know those great folks down in the boxes, those that have on so many diamonds, and such fine dresses, and the big bouquets; I would like to know if they are the folks I've read so much about in the papers. I know some of their names, but I don't know them all. Here is a list of them," she said, holding up her programme. "It's been some help to me, but I can't quite make it all out. But," she said, turning away with a sigh, "I suppose the likes of you and me don't know them. They ain't for us." Her neighbor turned to her again.

"Pardon me," she said. "I

think you asked me to point out to you the best society here, the best people—in fact, ‘the great folks,’ I think you said. I have done so. I mean it seriously.”

The little woman’s eyes grew big, “Now you’re chaffing me,” she said. I don’t know that her ideas of social economics were any changed by this chance conversation.

But I have been guilty of a great digression. Well, on this particular night the usual chatter went on about Helen. There was little Miss Daisy, the *débutante*, who, one might have thought, would be delighted with the music, at least during her first season, and would have listened. But no, she must imitate her elders, and her little white shoulders, of which too much entirely might be seen, went bobbing up and down, and the little red lips went buzz, buzz, buzz, quite like the more hardened sinners. The looks of annoyance aimed at them

from below—looks that went through Helen and made her tingle with mortification—created absolutely no impression whatever upon little Miss Daisy, who smiled amiably, and who seemed to regard herself as particularly distinguished. Now Helen happened to know Miss Daisy's parents—good, honest, country people, who were distantly related to Mrs. Crane, and who thought it would be just the greatest thing in the world for their daughter if she would be taken under her wing and given the polish of a winter or two in New York's best society. Helen was positive they had no idea of the kind of costume Daisy was sporting in that best society, had no idea that Miss Daisy's chaperon had insisted on buying an entirely new outfit for the simple little country girl. Helen could hear Miss Daisy saying:

“Isn't that Mrs. Keith-Brew and—Oh, there's Charlie Borne

again in the Marsh box. I guess they're engaged. Look what gorgeous flowers Mamie Marsh has." And this to the accompaniment of the most sublime music that ever greeted mortal ears!

At last came the *entr'acte*, when talking was at least legitimized. A large number of young men danced in and out of the box, as Miss Daisy was already a great favorite, and there was the additional attraction, for more highly seasoned tastes, of Mrs. Belmar, the handsome and gay widow, who was always overflowing with spicy news and witty take-offs of her friends. She was all white skin, black eyes, black tulle, and diamonds. Dr. Brent moved restlessly about in her chair. The conversation going on about her was hardly calculated to either stimulate or interest her.

Miss Daisy—white lace and pearls:

"Isn't Wagner dull?"

Male voice number one: "Yes; it would have been insufferable if my box hadn't been immediately opposite yours."

Black tulle and diamonds—suppressing a yawn:

"Do tell us something exciting, can't you? I've done my very best to stay awake."

White lace and pearls: "Oh, good-evening, Mr. Price; are you an ardent admirer of Wagner?"

Male voice number two: "Well, to tell the truth, I don't know Wagner from Bellini; I never did. But Richard's all the rage, so of course I fall dutifully into line." Loud laughter.

Black tulle and diamonds: "Behave yourself; how dreadful! aren't you ashamed of yourself, sir?"

Mrs. Crane—red velvet and rubies: "I don't believe it; Louise Skidmore is a beautiful little goose, but she's no worse than that." Helen listened with a beating heart.

Black tulle and diamonds: "To be stupid is the worst crime of all, in society. Just watch them for a minute; here, take my glasses and see how her diamond necklace goes pit-a-pat, pit-a-pat, and just watch his eyes; he positively can't take them off of her. Why, the pair are making a perfect exhibition of themselves!"

White lace and pearls: "But isn't he divinely handsome?"

Male voice number two: "Where is Mr. Skidmore?"

Red velvet and rubies (dryly): "Mr. Skidmore has no time for the opera."

Black tulle and diamonds: "No, nor for his wife either."

Red velvet and rubies: "Then, where's the harm in poor Louise having an escort? She can't stay at home and mope all night, can she?"

Male voice number two: "Ha, ha, ha! No harm in the least, not the slightest, not the least in the world."

Chorus: "Ha, ha, ha!" All seemed to enjoy the excellent joke.

Helen raised her glasses, and looked across at the Skidmore box. She saw Mrs. Skidmore, looking radiantly beautiful. She wore a corsage wonderfully and fearfully made. It seemed to be entirely of feathers of a blue-black tinge, and the light falling on them made them seem almost alive; it was cut very low, and the beautiful white neck arched exquisitely up to the soft auburn hair. There was a deep flush on her cheeks, as if she were conscious of the dozens of opera glasses aimed at her from all parts of the house. Slightly behind her, toying with her magnificent feather fan, and gazing very speakingly at her was Mortimer Stuart Verplanck.

Helen dropped her glasses with a little shiver. She leaned back in her chair; she felt the blood rush from her face.

"Why, my dear doctor, aren't you well? you are as pale as a ghost."

"Why, doctor, you must take my vinaigrette."

"Doctor, this won't do. We shall have to prescribe for you."

At last, at last, the opera was over. Fancy being glad, relieved that the "Götterdämmerung" was over. But the place had become almost unendurable to her since she had seen those two in the box opposite to her. God! Was that man to enter her life again? Was he to cut down another flower? Was he still at large, feeding upon the purity, the innocence of the most beautiful, the most lovable women of society? Where was conscience, where was decency? She had no doubt that had Mortimer Stuart Verplanck entered the box, Miss Daisy would have been all smiles, and she would have edged that he might take the seat next to her. Doubtless she had already been instructed that Mor-

timer. Stuart Verplanck, although a widower, was considered the best catch in town, altogether the best family in New York to marry into. "And Harold, Harold," groaned Helen, "who is it now that is casting off all that is sweet in life, all that is dearest, for ambition, for worldly success, for fame?"





XV.

AS Harold sat in his office, surrounded by a thousand papers, and endeavoring to put his mind upon them, he was in reality thinking of his wife. He was not at all satisfied with her condition. It was all very well to be told that it was natural, that after the birth of her child she would regain her normal condition, etc., etc. But still he was not easy. It was not pleasant to see his beautiful, self-possessed Louise reduced to a state of nervousness and lassitude from which it seemed impossible to arouse her. It was not pleasant to have her burst into tears almost at any glance

that was cast upon her. It was not pleasant to have her shrink from his touch as if she were afraid of him. There was no use, he could not put his mind upon his business, and so he resolved to call upon Dr. Manning and have a little quiet talk with him. Dr. Manning welcomed him cordially. He smiled at Harold's fears.

"A mere nothing, my dear sir, a mere nothing. It will all pass away. Merely a bit nervous. Natural enough, in her condition, you know ; a little hyperæsthetic, that is all. Pull yourself together. You had better be taking a tonic, and you will see all these fears will come to nothing. In a time like this, my dear sir, all we need is a little patience—a little patience, my dear Mr. Skidmore, and we shall see everything the same as before."

Harold was forced to rest satisfied, and to possess his soul with patience. Nevertheless, he was uneasy. It was difficult, with all

his faith in Dr. Manning, to attribute all Louise's eccentricities to this state of hyper-something.

Meanwhile the doctor's handsome brougham stood at the door for many hours. A consultation was had with two of the greatest authorities, but nothing was decided but to await coming events with as much equanimity as possible.

One day Harold came into his wife's room to take leave before going to his office. She smiled faintly as he entered.

"I want to ask you a favor."

"What is it? You know, dear, I shall grant it if it be in my power."

"I know it: let me see Dr. Brent." Harold started back in dismay.

"Dr. Brent?" he repeated vaguely.

"I know it seems foolish, but I have an idea that if I have her I shall get well. But you mustn't tell Dr. Manning; I think he would

be mad. Promise you will get Dr. Brent to come in, but don't tell Dr. Manning."

"But what foolish idea is this? What does it mean?"

"Oh, I know you don't approve of women doctors, but let me try just this once; I have heard of her doing such wonderful things. Do let me have her, Harold."

"It isn't that I disapprove of women doctors; send for anyone you want."

"Then you will let me have her?"

"No, no; anyone you want but her," added Harold hastily. "There are a great many others."

"But you know there isn't one with her reputation. Why, what makes you so set against poor Dr. Brent?" Harold could only murmur:

"No, it is impossible. Ask anything else but that." He left the room abruptly. As he closed the door he thought he heard the words, "I shall die, I shall die."

All the morning these half-whispered words of his wife rang in his ears. He could think of nothing else. To be sure it had at first struck him as impossible that Helen should treat his wife. Still, there was really no harm in it, and on thinking over the idea, some of the incongruity disappeared. Besides, he could not stand those words of his wife. So he looked up Helen's office in the directory and, jumping into a cab, was soon at her door.

It was office hours, and he was obliged to wait in the waiting room. He looked about him. He was the only gentleman among half a dozen ladies. A neat little buttons had ushered him in promptly, and he found himself in the most attractive waiting room he had ever seen. There was a great deal of soft warm color about the room. There was no carpet; the floor was a bright polished wood, but it was covered profusely with richly tinted rugs

of those beautiful, dull Oriental tones. The sofas and chairs were neat and comfortable, some rich maroon, and others dull Persian blue. Several small oak tables were covered with the latest magazines, and on the walls, which were painted a delicate green, were many fine etchings.

As he sat waiting, he took up one of the magazines and carelessly turned its pages. He saw an article, on the "Public Kindergarten System," by Helen Brent, M. D. On the cover of the magazine was a special announcement of her article, which was evidently considered the chief card of the month. He could not help but think what a complete, full, rich life was Helen's. Looking about the room, he was sure the ladies were among the most exclusive circles in the city. Two or three faces were familiar to him. He smiled with a sort of deprecatory shame at the thought that he had once dared to persuade this

woman to leave her work, to give up her profession, her life work, and accept him in their stead.

Hearing the office door open he stepped out into the hall to say he only wished to speak to the doctor a moment, and to ask if he could be permitted to enter without delay. Harold was surprised to see that Helen was not very calm, although it was evident that she was making a strong effort at self-control. He noticed with pity that she looked very tired. There were dull shadows under her eyes, and her skin was not as smooth and clear as it used to be. They shook hands formally.

"I am afraid you work too hard," he said. She shook her head and motioned him to a seat. "Doctor," he continued, "I have a coupé outside; it will wait until you are disengaged. My wife is very ill, I am afraid; she has asked for you; I beg that you will come as soon as possible."

"Yes," she said quietly. "Who has been in attendance?"

"Dr. Manning," answered Harold impatiently, as if he could not see what connection that had with the case.

"Does he know you've called upon me?"

Harold told Helen of his wife's whim that he should not be informed. Helen smiled.

"But I cannot visit Dr. Manning's patient," she said. Harold made a gesture of impatience.

"I cannot see——" he began; Helen interrupted him.

"I shall be happy to see your wife in consultation with Dr. Manning."

"But we are losing valuable time, and she has set her heart upon Dr. Manning not knowing a word of your coming."

"But I could not consent to that, and it would not be for the patient's good that I should." Harold murmured something

about "women's nonsense," but Helen replied coldly:

"Pardon me, but you do not understand. This is no woman's foolish whim. I am acting no differently from any one of my colleagues. You doubtless think I am not bound by the usual etiquette of the profession—what does a woman doctor care about those things? On the contrary, I am a regular member of the County Medical Society and of the Academy, and I am judged no differently from the other members. I shall be at your service all the afternoon. If you will kindly send me word when Dr. Manning will be able to meet me, I shall be happy to call and see your wife with him; or, at least, I must have his permission to see her alone."

Harold rose. "Good-day," he said.

"Good-day, Mr. Skidmore."



XVI.

HAROLD laid his quandary before Dr. Manning, who courteously arranged that Mrs. Skidmore should be humored. Accordingly Dr. Manning and Dr. Brent talked the case over, and it was given into Dr. Brent's hands.

Helen had many incentives to do her utmost. Chief among the varying motives was the hope that Mrs. Skidmore, once restored to health, might again become united with her husband and throw aside past influences. Helen had strong hopes that she might succeed in awakening Harold to a proper sense of the responsibilities of married life. She saw in Louise

a beautiful, vain, weak woman ; a woman that needed an atmosphere of luxury and adulation ; a woman above all that needed to lean on some stronger character. This stronger character she should have had in her husband, but Helen, and indeed all the world, knew that the active public life of the Honorable Harold Skidmore left but little room for the fulfillment of any demands that married life might make of him.

So far as Helen could see, Harold's life ran upon precisely the same lines after his marriage to the beautiful Miss Cushing of Baltimore as during his bachelorhood. Indeed, since that time, each year saw him more prominent in his profession, more active in reforms, and more in demand for all sorts of public meetings, from an after-dinner speech to presiding at the latest Indignation Meeting, receiving at the Club's reception, or introducing the latest distinguished foreigner on the

occasion of his opening lecture. New York, indeed the whole country, needed him, and all voted that there was but one Harold Skidmore, and that no one could take his place.

Now, in the face of all this could anyone blame him that he neglected to accompany his wife to the opera, or sometimes failed to preside over the distribution of the joint at his own table; who could be so narrow as to claim that for such a man the duties to his fellow-countrymen do not come first? Did you say, "Then such a man ought not to marry?" Pshaw, my dear friend, you are Puritanical, absurd! Why, if the world were to agree with you, where would be our college presidents, our statesmen, our ministers, our doctors, our lawyers? All within the pale of dismal bachelordom? You see to what your fanatical ideas would bring you.

I hear you whispering some-

thing about women, how the world judges them ; I do not quite grasp what you mean ; you know your position is untenable, so you are afraid to speak above your breath. Do you ask, "Why is it that professional women dare not marry unless they are prepared to reshape their lives on new lines ? Why does the world poke and pry into the married lives of such women to see if John goes without warm mufflers, or if his socks go darnless, or if the bread is doughy, when it concerns itself only with one side of the great question ?" Ah, well, why discuss it further ? It was a problem constantly in Helen's mind, but she found very few that cared to discuss it with her. People opened wide their eyes, refused to see the analogy, fell back on the original axioms upon the ways of the world—such is life—what are you going to do about it ?—you can't change human nature, etc., etc.

But there was not much room

in Helen's busy life just now to be pondering over problems. There was work to do, hard work, and she bent all her forces to it.

Louise's child was born dead, and was hastily buried. The details of Rose's death were constantly before Helen, and at times it seemed as if her strength would fail; it seemed impossible that she could nerve herself to the task. But the weeks went by, and it was evident that Louise would live; the recovery was slow, but little by little her strength returned to her. One day Helen paid an early visit to Louise and found her very blue and hysterical. Helen proposed a trip to Europe; not a flying trip, but a visit of, at least, a year, when she could rest at some of those quiet, beautiful spots out of the reach of the usual tourist.

"I shall make Mr. Skidmore go with you," Helen said. Mrs. Skidmore smiled wearily.

"What?"

"Oh, yes."

"He might take me across and fly back again on the next steamer, but you don't think for an instant he'd have time to stay with me?" Helen nodded. "What, a year? I thought you knew better than that, doctor; I assure you it's impossible."

"Very well, I shall do my best. I shall prescribe it as a cure for you. I shall insist; you know I am so very forcible when I insist." Mrs. Skidmore smiled, then she burst into tears, and totally unable to control herself, she sobbed bitterly for some time. Helen prescribed a quieting dose, and returned to her office. As she left the room, she could catch the words, "if you only knew, if you only knew," and Helen in her heart answered, "I know very much more than you dream I know, poor thing."

In her office Helen took up the paper and prepared for a few minutes' rest. Almost the first head-

ing that attracted her attention was:

GREAT DINNER.

**The Honorable Harold Skidmore Makes
a Powerful Speech—He Says the
Lack of Family Life is the Chief
Misery and Degradation of
the Poor—Flies to Phil-
adelphia—Returns to
New York by Mid-
night Train.**

She read on ; the speech was extensively quoted :

The family is the basis of the social structure to-day. . . . The family is an institution, as someone has well said, "In whose sacredness we believe society's pillars rest." The hopelessness of the present condition of the poor lies in the utter absence of family life. . . . Our problem is to build up a pure, a beautiful home life among the poor classes, but before we can do that philanthropy must step in and supply such influences as are lacking at the present moment.

We must never intrude brutally upon the family circle of the poor. There is too much of this well-meaning but offensive prying into their conditions. The man who breaks up the sanctity of home life, who destroys the beautiful relation of husband and wife, of parents and

children, who does anything to weaken these blessed ties is sinful, I may say criminal. (Cheers).

More than once during the day was Helen called upon to discuss the great speech of the night before. On all sides she heard enthusiastic references. "How true!" "How beautiful!" "How admirably put!"





XVII.

WHEN his wife was well enough to take her first drive, Harold called upon Helen. This time he was not kept waiting. He was ushered upstairs into the parlor, which was lit with the soft glow of several shaded lamps. There were cozy easy chairs and small tables filled with odd knick-knacks ; one table was entirely for old silver, quite like the collections of a fashionable woman.

Helen entered, dressed in a light, flowing house dress. Harold had not seen her so beautiful for many years ; lately he had seen her only in the midst of her professional work—to-night she looked like a queenly woman of

the world. Her blond hair was twisted softly, instead of arranged in the smooth straight braids she had accustomed him to lately ; her gown had a graceful train, and a profusion of soft yellow lace about her throat softened all the stern lines of her face. In her professional relations she always wore a plain black dress, generally alpaca, short and stiff, and large, wide, flat shoes, while to-night she had on pretty kid slippers, and her foot looked small and well shaped. Dr. Brent was nearly completely lost in the Helen of old. Harold put out his hand impetuously.

"Helen," he said. "I have come to thank you for what you have done for me!" The tears came into her eyes as she grasped his hand. It was years since he had called her anything but doctor. Besides, she had really done so little ; what was the saving of his wife's body unless she could save her soul, and she was not sure that she could do that. She

was keeping a sharp watch on the movements of Verplanck ; she had heard only a day or two ago that he was down South, so she thought there was little to fear from him. Her plan was to send Mrs. Skidmore off to Europe and to try to build up her nervous system by degrees. It would be slow work, but she felt that was the first step and nothing could be done until then. Ultimately she hoped to bring husband and wife together again and to lead her to confess all to him.

They sat there for some time in silence. The thoughts of both reverted to the past. Harold had grown much older ; it was evident that great cares sat upon him. The hair about his high white forehead had turned quite gray, the forehead was seamed with many a deep furrow, the mouth had deep lines about it ; still the same bright eyes looked at her. How she longed to be able to lay her head upon his shoulder and

cry out, "Take me back, take me back." And this man was another's husband, and this other woman had not known how to prize him. "O Harold," she whispered in her heart, "could I have done you a wrong such as this; could I, with all my peculiar views of marriage, could I have so forgotten my wifely duties?"

Something like a groan broke from Helen's lips, and she hastened to break the silence which was growing unbearable. A wild fear possessed her that she would shriek out something that she had no right to say.

"Harold," she said, "you must not thank me; you do not know, indeed, you do not, how much comfort it has been to me that your wife has recovered."

"Helen, I have not only come to thank you, but also to confess my mistake."

"What mistake?" she stammered.

"Yes; I feel truly humble; I,

who laughed at your profession, or rather who thought you should leave your work to be done better by men ; I, who asked you to give up this work for me ; I, who—oh, you know what I mean, Helen—it is hardly necessary for me to speak ; it seems almost more than I can bear, when I realize that it is to you I owe the life of my wife. I feel that you did for her what no one else could have done.”

“You need not feel humbled for that.”

“Yes ; I feel humbled to think that I should have dared in my youthful conceit to put myself up against all that your profession must have meant to you. Now, do you understand how I feel ? It is a great triumph for you, Helen ?” Helen’s voice came forth strangely dull and weak.

“No, Harold, it is no triumph for me.” She longed to cry out, “Ask me now to give it all up, even now, when you see how much it means ; even now, when you

know that the world has a claim upon me, ask me now." What she did say was, "I knew some day your better self would understand me and cease to blame me."

"To blame you? You don't know how long ago I ceased to blame you ; almost against my will I was forced to acknowledge that you were right, but then I thought myself right too. I looked upon the whole struggle as a miserable problem that never could be solved aright. I do not see that it can. It still seems to me that marriage, as it is on this earth, as it must be, I suppose, cannot mean the union of two such beings as you and I."

"It could, Harold, if you men had faith."

"I see no way out of it, but I have come to acknowledge that it is hard for the woman to sacrifice so much in order to reach her intellectual ideal."

"It is no more necessary for a woman to give it up than a man."

"What?"

"I repeat: there are some things that a man ought to give up just as much as a woman. Only the shoe that pinches has always been supposed to sit on the other foot. You know what Dorothea Brooke says about marriage—'Marriage is a state of higher duties. I never thought of it as mere personal ease.' I am afraid that means that marriage must be a state of higher duties to both man and woman; it is only when both sexes understand the responsibility which rests on each, it is only then that marriage can be truly ideal. Now I am going to give you an evidence of what I mean. Suppose that I absolutely demand that your wife go abroad for at least a year?"

"I should say, by all means, I think it is a good idea."

"Very good. And suppose that I also absolutely demand that your wife goes to Europe accompanied by her husband?"

Harold jumped nearly out of

his seat. "Impossible!" he exclaimed.

"That is just what I knew you would say, and yet you will go."

"I cannot. It is impossible; that is too much to ask. I will join her in a few months and remain a month or so with her during the summer."

"No, that is not sufficient; you must accompany her over and remain with her."

"Helen, you are unreasonable. Here's that big railroad case coming off in the courts next month."

"I know it."

"Don't you know I'm pledged to speak at the Republican convention in the spring?"

"Yes, I know it."

"Besides, the President has sent for me; I shall probably be called for, on and off, to Washington during the next six weeks. You know my relations with him are such that I—I——"

"I know it all, but you must go with your wife."

Harold walked about the room impatiently. "Helen, this is pure nonsense ; I cannot go, and there's an end to it. I'll engage trained nurses, companions, maids, even a physician. By the way, Helen, why don't you go with her? You could look after her, and she would be very happy with you. By Jove, do you know it would be a capital idea?"

"No trained nurse, companion, or physician is needed. What my patient requires is—a husband." Harold looked at Helen very sharply.

"Why, Helen, what on earth do you mean?"

"I mean that her nerves are completely shattered, that she is utterly broken down, that she ought to have your companionship, your protection, your constant presence. You ought to give up some of these important things that prevent you from being with her." Harold was silent

for some time ; then he said, with some emotion :

“ Perhaps you are right, Helen. I will try to be with her more. Perhaps she has been a little lonely sometimes, poor little woman. I will give up some of my work.” Helen’s heart gave a great bound. There was a trembling eagerness in her voice as she asked :

“ At once? Will you go with her to Europe ? ”

“ Now, Helen, you can’t expect a man to reform all at once. My word is given that I will see through some matters personally. When I can get free, I give you my word of honor, the instant I can get free, I shall join my wife in Europe, and will even take a vacation of some months, if necessary. But that will mean that I must wind up some of my affairs. My partners must consent ; they must be prepared ; then I will go.”

“ Yes, if not too late,” murmured Helen, but she was not heard.



XVIII.

THERE they were, those odious words; there were the lines, black with printers' ink and big, so all the world would be attracted! The words danced before Helen's eyes and her hands trembled so that the paper rattled merrily, but she could just make out the story. There was no mistake; there was no possible chance of mistaken identity; the journalists knew their trade too well, and made sure that everyone would understand the full significance of this latest and spiciest scandal.

ELOPEMENT IN THE FOUR HUNDRED.

**Three Hundred and Ninety-eight Shocked
and Horrified—The Wife of the Honor-
able Harold Skidmore runs off to
Europe with the Heir of the
Verplanck Millions—Rumors
that Mr. Skidmore is
Utterly Prostrated—
Refuses to be In-
terviewed.**

Mrs. Keith-Brew was ushered into the office. She began at once:

"Why, my dear doctor, you seem quite upset. Yes, I know; isn't it awful! Poor Mr. Skidmore, and yet I don't think anyone else is really surprised." Helen's voice shook.

"Yes, Mrs. Keith-Brew, it is shocking. I am completely overcome. You know Mrs. Skidmore was a patient of mine." The eyes of her visitor twinkled. She knew something now of Helen's story, and she chuckled to herself as she thought that the interest didn't lie on *that* side of the house.

"Well," she answered, demurely, "there's a lot of fuss now, of

course, but I suppose there'll be a divorce and then the next thing we hear, Lady Milminme will be entertaining her new sister-in-law at Grey Oaks."

Helen shuddered; she knew how natural that was.

"And I suppose she will be received everywhere," she exclaimed, coldly. Mrs. Keith-Brew laughed disagreeably.

"Well, of course, society can't afford to slight Lady Milminme's sister-in-law. However, we must put on our sternest look until she really is her sister-in-law."

Helen clasped her trembling fingers about her forehead. She leaned back quietly a minute, while her patient eyed her sharply, preparing her account of how Dr. Brent stood the news. Helen's voice was harsh.

"I suppose you and all her dearest friends would cut her now if you met her." Mrs. Keith-Brew looked shocked:

"Why, of course, I hope we have some self-respect left."

"Yesterday you were a good friend of Mrs. Skidmore." Mrs. Keith-Brew smiled.

"Ah, but yesterday was not to-day." She pointed significantly at the paper which lay on the table.

"Ah, yes; I understand; yet you have told me again and again that all the world knew their relations and that people had almost begun to wonder how her husband could be so blind."

"Oh, of course we knew it, but then as long as her husband upheld her and she was received, why I for one wouldn't be the first to push her down. I don't believe in women being too hard upon each other; it's a hard world."

"No, Mrs. Keith-Brew, I don't believe in women being hard upon each other either, but I confess the ways of society have always been darkly mysterious to

me ; you call it pushing a woman down to show your disapproval before the final crime. Now I have always claimed that the present indifferent attitude of society is the very thing that pushes women down. A woman is indiscreet, she is talked about, and there are shrugs and smiles, but so long as she manages to fool her husband and keep up appearances society refuses to step in. Suddenly she loses her husband's confidence by some flagrantly foolish act, perhaps no worse, but more careless than the others, and the whole world which has been smiling and chattering with her, turns its back and frowns—it knows her no longer.”

“But, my dear, you wouldn't have us listen to every bit of idle gossip and be unjust to someone, would you?”

“There is no question of your *listening* to gossip. You not only do that, but you repeat it and enjoy it. It seems to me I would

either refuse to listen and believe, or believing—yes, I should dare act up to my belief.”

“What, cut a woman for a mere peccadillo, and force her into worse.”

“That is the usual society point of view. On the contrary, I claim that if the world would frown on peccadilloes, as you kindly call them, many a vain woman would pause and go no farther. As it is now, society, with its smiles and bows up to the last moment of endurance, only smooths the way down to the lowest pit of shame. A woman like Louise Skidmore—a society queen until to-day—positively goes to her disgrace with the courtesies and applause of society. With all the talk and gossip, the secret sneers that have been going on during the past months, who weren't glad to have Mrs. Harold Skidmore at their receptions? Oh, it is cruel! Louise Skidmore was weak and foolish, she had few interests to

save her, and her husband was unable to shield her as he might have done; yet perhaps if society had dared to say 'This is wrong' when she first began to depend on the society and attention of another than her husband, it might not have been too late. Now, the world may do as it pleases; the mischief is done, done, done."





XIX.

IT was postmarked Egypt. "I have been ill, [the letter read] very ill. I think they did not expect me to live one year ago. I was ordered here for rest and recuperation, 'as if the outside world can bring back my inward peace of mind,' thought I at first, superbly indifferent. But day by day, week by week I have grown stronger, almost against my will. We are animals after all, and we can't resist physical influences, shrink as we may in the depths of our soul.

"I want to tell you, Helen, I thought I was humbled when I

came to you last to confess, as I thought, poor fool! my mistake. *Humbled!* my God! I knew not what the word meant. I was a very prince of arrogance. If you saw me now, you would not need to ask; it is written all over my face, on every line of my figure.

"Yes, I understand now. But how was I to know? You tried to tell me; tried to make me understand. Ah, but the tragedy of human life is just that each individual being must learn its own lesson, in its own way, as God sees fit. (A few months ago, Helen, I could not have used that name.) Was there anything in the lives of other men about me to make me pause? Nothing; I only did what hundreds of men were doing, are doing. Why, then, was I singled out for punishment? But this is not the spirit in which I took up my pen. I have not addressed you to repine, nor to sigh, nor to curse, but to tell you I see my own life as it was; my own

personality seems to have fallen from me by some mysterious process, and I can stand aside, almost calmly now, and review the past.

"How you must smile to see me thus brought so low—but no. I did not mean to write that. You will not smile ; you are kind. I remember, last time we met, you said, 'It is no triumph for me, Harold.' There was a look in your eyes then, Helen—a look—but I dare not trust to my senses ; no, I suppose I am dreaming.

"Why are you so immaculate ? Why do I see you before me, armed with righteous indignation ? Why does my heart sink so when I try to make believe that there is some flaw, something lacking in your life ? Is there room for any regret, for any longing in a life so beautifully full and rich ? If I could believe it, and with your last words to me and that look in your eyes, Helen, I might, I might——

"And yet a woman has no right,

no right, I tell you, to be so faultless, so erect, so self-dependent. It is the province of woman to be humble. You remember *D'Arcy* in the 'Abbesse de Jouarre.'

“Que les anciens maîtres avaient raison de croire que la vertu d'une femme a toujours besoin d'être humiliée; l'humiliation est nécessaire à la femme. La nature l'a voulu.

“This is rank egotism, is it not? But how can I ever hope to explain myself, to portray all that is surging up within me?

“There is a ray of hope that penetrates down to the depths of my heart, a hope that some day I may be able to face the future, to start life over again. It can never be built up again upon the same lines; what I have lived through must prevent that forever.

“So you have not triumphed; life has not poured all its blessings upon you? Bless you for having said that, Helen, bless you! Not now, not now, but some day there

will come knocking at your gates
a broken Harold, as a suppliant
will he come, hat off, eyes lowered,
kneeling in the dust."



